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Brazil in Progress: Talking About My Generation

Using a First Person Documentary to Analyse
Brazilian Large-Scale Social Movements

by
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Creative and Critical Practice
Media, Film and Music

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Sussex

July 2020

Statement

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

Brazil In Progress: Talking About My Generation

Using a First Person Documentary to Analyse Brazilian Large-Scale Social Movements

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Abstract

This Creative and Critical Practice PhD explored Brazil's recent history with large-scale social movements through the lens of my personal journey in immigrating to the UK and subsequently returning home to my native country of Brazil. Throughout this research, I reflected upon my transnational identity, delving into how this element influenced my sense of self and consequently shaped the construction of my first-person documentary.

The documentary and the thesis take on a self-conscious, culturally-based approach to first person documentary film and its processes of production, bringing forward the intricacies and challenges of translating the personal elements onto film. Navigating through my intimate self-exploration and experiences in self-inscribing, narrating and filming the documentary, I explored the ways in which the first person mode can be utilised to address wider social issues, through a personalised, individual experience.

By exploring audiovisual tropes and techniques akin to autobiographical films and online video-blogs, I constructed a personal narrative that investigated the key catalysts that initiated Brazil's large-scale social movements of 2013 and why they came to be. Interviews with friends and family members, as well as the use of private family archive footage and historical archive imageries, enabled the research to reveal juxtapositions in opinions and in attitudes between my family's and my generation. Thus, creating a space for comparison between the past and present.

This practice-led research concludes that, despite the ever-growing number of first person documentary films, the genre is still located within the margins of mainstream cinema. The first person documentary mode allows the filmmaker to experiment with diverse audiovisual techniques, self-direct the exploration of their personal identity, chronicle their journey in finding their place in the world and represent issues often

made invisible by mainstream media outlets. In this approach, conceptualized by Alisa Lebow (2012) as 'Cinema of We', the first person, the 'I' of the documentary, is conceived as plural, as a social 'I'. This always implies an interconnection with another, may that be a group, a mass or the society the 'I' is inserted in. As expressed by the film's title, "Talking About My Generation", my 'I' is constructed and depicted in relation to my friends, family and the social movements of 2013.

This thesis also concludes that, as new media technologies rapidly evolve and develop, documentary filmmaking and its processes of distribution go through an important process of transformation, adapting to new forms of consuming and producing visual media. Videoblogs make use of first person documentary filmmaking tropes, consequently becoming a compact, audience-driven strand of the genre. The most recent large-scale Brazilian movements seen in 2013, took advantage of this medium as a way to organize, disseminate ideas and build community networks. This was a fundamental difference from its predecessor mass movements of 1984 and 1992. All of these large-scale movements can be described as 'cycles' with outcomes that paved the way for other protests to occur by building on previous socio-economic demands and grievances.

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Dedication

To my parents, who always believed in and supported me throughout the whirlwind of emotions that was finalising this Creative and Critical Practice PhD.

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Introduction

This Creative and Critical Practice PhD consists of two elements: a first person documentary film (40 minutes) and a 40,000 word written exegesis. The practical component, conceived in the format of a first person documentary, provides a visual account of the filmmaker's process of self-investigation and self inscription, while situating their personal journey within a broader, social context. The exegesis provides reflection upon the themes that emerged from creating and embarking on a filmic journey of discovery and in undertaking practice-led research on first-person documentary.

During the production of the film, issues of transnationality and generational divide arose and overlapped with concepts of identity and home. These key elements shaped and contributed towards the overall construction of the narrative and therefore needed to be unpacked and further evaluated within the exegesis.

The exegesis seeks to offer a theoretical framework for the layers of experience encountered during the making of the practical component, providing the analytical grounds in which the research stands on. The combined components of the research contributed to the field of film and media studies. The focus of this work lay predominantly in contributing to debates and understandings of first person documentary film theory. The film then comes to inform the thesis, and therefore my recommendation is for it to be seen before the reading of this exegesis.

Research Questions

My key research questions are as follows:

- 1) In what ways can first person documentary film contribute to documentary and film practices as they come face to face with issues of transnational identity, generational divides (political, social, and technological)?
- 2) Consequently, how can the first person mode act as a vehicle for considering family, culture and identity in documentary film?
- 3) What might first person documentary offer in exploring Brazil's socio-political crisis with the renewed rise of large-scale social movements in 2013?

These questions will direct and shape the discussion within the chapters of this thesis, providing an insight into how the first-person mode can be used to explore and depict personal views and experiences that are set within a larger, political context.

The push and pull of re-connection

In early 2013, after nearly five years of living and studying in the UK, I found myself in need of moving back to my home country of Brazil. I had just completed a master's degree, and my UK visa had reached its expiry date.

At that point, I did not feel emotionally prepared for my impending relocation back to my native country. Despite the fact I was born and raised there, it no longer felt like a place I could call home.

I had spent a significant portion of my adult life in England, where I was exposed to a variety of people, languages, ideas and cultures. The wealth of independence, self-development and experience gained from this had a deep impact on who I became as a person, fundamentally changing me. The person who left Brazil in September 2008 to relocate to Britain had now merged with the one who was about to leave the UK in the early stages of 2013. This ability to navigate, and sometimes float between different subject positions impacted and transformed my personal identity, points of view and opinions, influencing my perception, being and the way in which I experienced the world.

In moving back to Brazil, this person I had become would have to go through an essential process of reflection. This process required me to readjust to formerly

internalised, yet now inherently different belief systems, culture, and rituals. These systems felt familiar but were never questioned prior to my experiences in the UK. My experiences as a Latin-American immigrant have assisted in reshaping, resignifying and transforming my own idea of self. It gave my self a fluid, transnational character: an identity that was able to transition between the two realms of being a Latin American immigrant and a Brazilian citizen. Understanding the hybrid character of my own identity allowed me to locate my self in a new, uncertain, floating space: what Homi Bhabha (1994) referred to as 'the third space'. The 'third space' can be a space where great inspiration can be found. However, it is also a very conflicting, tension filled space to be in. I will expand on Bhabha's work and its relevance to my research in the coming chapters.

As a way to frame this practice-led research project, I believe it has been important to bring my experiences as a female Brazilian citizen, who is also an immigrant in the UK, to the forefront. These factors played a key role in finding my ground while making this documentary.

Although I had reservations about the prospect of moving back to Brazil in 2013, at that time, it seemed like the country was seeing glimpses of a booming economy, exponential growth and prosperous change. The country was carrying the title of an 'emerging economy', forming part of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries deemed to be at prosperous developing stages in their economy. Brazil was preparing to host two major world events, the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic games. The story that had seemingly placed South America's largest country in a prominent position of positive socioeconomic development was then being questioned when protests began to erupt all over the country.

During the rise of the 2013 protests, I found myself living in the city of Curitiba, in South Brazil. This was one of the most socioeconomically developed cities in the country. I vividly remember being in my living room and hearing loud chanting noises coming from the streets outside. I curiously browsed through Brazilian TV channels in the hope that I would discover the cause of the commotion. However, from what I

could witness, mainstream media had chosen to disregard the movements at that stage. They were full of their daily soap opera and entertainment slots. It was through social media platforms that I was finally able to gain an insight into what was taking place in the streets all over the country.

Through Facebook, I was made aware that one of the largest demonstrations was due to take place in the city centre of Curitiba. Although I had no idea or understanding of the magnitude and scale of what I was about to witness or be a part of, my initial reaction was to reach for my camera and capture the events as they unfolded. I sought to immerse myself within the experience, recording people's testimonies and their emotionally charged expressions of frustration and deflated ambition. It was an opportunity to witness, first hand, what was happening on the streets of Brazil, while at the same time ensuring what was taking place in front of me was imprinted on film.

My aim during filming was to allow the camera to act as an observer, using various camera angles to capture and reflect my experiences on the streets, the protests and the people who partook in them. I did not have the financial means or the equipment to create a documentary film in the high-budget style of cinema, using highly produced, staged shots and a sophisticated soundtrack. In order to produce this film, I had to resort to innovative, creative approaches in the construction of its aesthetics and narrative. My aim was to capture the rawness of these tumultuous events, depicting them in their true, grand, chaotic form through the use of hand-held shots. I also wished to convey the highly personal, honest and at times, uncomfortable conversations I had to have with my friends and family regarding their political stances. Above it all, I sought to translate into film, the troubling, confusing and deeply exciting experiences I had while making this documentary.

The choice to use documentary film as a tool for this research stemmed from a desire to document and experience the turbulence of the political unrest, while concomitantly putting it on record as a reference for research material purposes. As Barbash and Taylor state:

If you're writing a book or an article, you can go home and write it all up afterwards. With film, you have to shoot the events and activities at the time they occur. If you don't catch them, then they're lost forever. That's what is so special about film: it's linked absolutely, existentially to its object, a photochemical permeation of the world.
(1997, p. 2)

Upon reconsideration, what I initially failed to recognise during the initial process of production was my own role within the making of this piece. I too, was part of the political and social movements. As a Brazilian citizen, I sympathised with the cause and felt that the demands of those taking over the streets in search for their rights resonated with me. Moreover, it sparked within me a sense of national pride and belonging that I had not felt in a long time. It is important to highlight that this had been my first experience attending a large-scale movement of this capacity, so for me, the camera took on a much greater role. It became more than just a piece of technology to record events, and instead became an essential tool that I subconsciously relied upon to attend the protests.

Having never taken part in or experienced a political demonstration before, I was anxious and concerned about what to expect. Having a recording device in my hand throughout the demonstrations acted as a mental barrier and lessened these feelings of unease. It served a greater purpose. Having a camera in my hands made it easier for me to approach people, initiate conversations, question protesters on their personal views and discuss their role as active participants and organisers of the movements. It gave me the ability to act as a facilitator and interact with people whom I had never met before. People were inclined to engage and share their experiences freely, thus breaking down any barriers which may have initially been there.

Filming the 2013 protests allowed me to peer through a window into a world that I had never before experienced. It was as if the camera's presence had acted as an invitation

into other people's lives and experiences. For me, as a filmmaker, it had also taken on a protective role. By placing the camera close to my face and looking through its lens, I was inadvertently creating a wall between the subjects and myself. It became apparent that I was using the camera as a type of protective shield, which defended me against the conflicting emotions that arose during my experience in the protests. At the time, I believed it to be a one-way communication channel with people I did not know because it enabled me to engage with the protesters without necessarily exposing my own personal inexperience of mass political demonstrations. The camera acted as a vessel for my journey in documenting and understanding the protests while trying to reconnect and communicate with a place I once called home.

From 'Them' to 'I' to 'We'

It came across in the production of the film that I was attending these protests as a filmmaker and not as a Brazilian citizen. At the time, I strived to make a documentary about them, which required me to look at the protesters as others. I was eager to depict what I believed to be an exterior truth occurring in front of my eyes. This belief initially led me to fail to acknowledge that my presence in the demonstrations had a much deeper meaning than merely using videography to capture the events around me. Watching the raw footage that I had collected, I realised that I too was going to play a part in the story I was aiming to tell. It wasn't merely a film about them; I was ultimately making a film about us, or what Alisa Lebow (2012), one of the key writers on first person documentary, describes as the 'cinema of we'.

In the context of this research, the I of my story could not exist without the you. All the subjects in the film (close friends, family members and the experiences I had at the protests) were able to reflect back to me a perspective of the place I was within my own life. In this instance, I was because you (they) were and, therefore, we were together in a symbiotic relationship within the making of the documentary. Together, the subjects all fed into the desire I harboured to reconnect with and rediscover myself as a part of Brazilian society again:

Identity is what places you in a territory that is your “own”, in contrast to another territory, which is ‘foreign’ or ‘alien’. The definition of the latter, the territory of the ‘alien’ is as important as – if not more important than - the territory defined as your own. (Tella, 2012, p. 39)

My greatest challenge was coming to terms with the fact that both my native country and the country I had emigrated to felt like the ‘alien’ territories described by Tella. Neither of these physical spaces ultimately resonated with me as a home. This raised the question of how I could place myself as the director and subject of the film, when my own concept of home and personal identity was blurred? The peculiarity of my situation was not lost on me, as it was the root cause of my feelings of anxiety and excitement about the process of constructing the film’s narrative. The research had opened a door into another aspect of my own idea of self. It had triggered me to raise and answer questions concerning my own personal experience and place within the protests, while attempting to capture and investigate the moments that had unfolded around me. Through the process of investigating this idea of self, I was able to explore the intrinsic complexities of the concepts of democracy and political participation across generations.

In essence, the outcome of the practice was not a film about me, nor was it a film about them. Instead, it was a piece that attempted to understand the mutual relationship and duality between the ‘I’ and the ‘we’, as inserted in the broader context of large-scale movements in Brazil. The ‘I’ therefore, does not stand alone, and as Lebow (2012) explains:

The “I” is always social, always already in relation, and when it speaks, as these filmmakers do, in the first person, it may appear to be in the first person singular “I” but ontologically speaking, it is always in effect, the first person plural “We”. (Lebow, 2012, p. 3)

The ‘I’ in my film does not reject the collective in which it is inserted; on the contrary, it remains immersed within it, informed by it. It draws on my individual, singular experience under the backdrop of a damaged, much wider collectivity.

It is important to acknowledge my depiction of large-scale social movements in Brazil through the vantage point of being a transnational, female filmmaker. By recognising my own subjectivity and role in the making of this documentary, I was able to understand the way in which I was acting as a portal for these people and their issues to be represented. As well as how my interaction with them had, in turn, shed light and reflected insight into my quest for self-identification.

The complexity of home

I was born and raised in Brazil and due to the nature of my parents' work, the family relocated to different parts of the country every four years or so. This was both a blessing and a curse to me. It was a blessing in that, from an early age, I was able to experience the immense cultural diversity Brazil has to offer. Brazil is a vastly expansive country, ranging from paradisiacal Amazonian backdrops in the North, to large European capitals in the South, inhabited by an array of people ranging from indigenous tribes to African immigrants. The process of migration became an integral part of me, and I developed an ability to adapt, assimilate and adjust to other places, spaces, and people.

While this opened up opportunities for growth and self-development, it also contributed to an ongoing feeling of rootlessness, which I could best describe as a feeling of being unable to truly call anywhere home.

Perhaps the subconscious motivation behind the making of this creative research project was to explore this notion of displacement. I had to come to terms with the fact that, in order to find my true meaning of home, I needed to understand my sense of place within my current life. This process was a huge personal challenge for me.

There is a multitude of ways, composed of several complex meanings, that can be referred to when trying to define 'home'. To address a few:

- i) One could look at home from the angle of territoriality (Porteous, 1976);
- ii) Place can be defined in terms of its emotional connotations and the idea of belonging (Tuan, 1977; Seamon, 1979; Buttimer, 1980);

- iii) The concept of home has been treated as a pathway for self-expression and identity (Appleyard, 1979).

Each of these could be applied to my use of the term 'home' within my research. In particular, when referring to the cities of Recife and Curitiba, as well as when referencing my time spent living in the UK.

Recife in North-East Brazil is where most of my family members reside. I have spent a significantly large amount of time here alongside family and during my early childhood, yet it is not somewhere that evokes true feelings of home for me. For this reason, I refer to it as home from a territorial perspective. Most of my teenager years were spent living in the city of Curitiba in Southern Brazil. It was there that I found, what I would describe as, a glimpse into a sense of belonging. This feeling of belonging was formed through the friendships, personal connections and shared experiences I developed during my time there. To this day, I still feel that internal connection and therefore refer to Curitiba as a place that I hold a strong emotional attachment with. The definition of home brought forward by Tuan, Seamon and Buttner (1980) embodies my personal attachment with Curitiba. Immigrating solo to the UK was a personal journey that gave me an opportunity to navigate through different layers of my own identity. Through learning how to adapt to a new culture, language, forms of communication and habits, I discovered and developed unexplored parts of my own self. It was in England that I flourished into my adult-self, finding a place in which I felt open to deconstructing previously inherited cultural practices, constraints and habits. It enabled me to liberate myself from learned patterns of behaviour and presented me with an environment where I was able to explore and experience new forms of culture and being. For this reason, within the context of this thesis, I place the UK in Appleyard's (1979) definition of home.

Each of these places has, at different moments in my life, sparked in me, even if briefly, a sense of home. Over the years, as I found myself going through deep, personal inner changes, my understanding of my own self mutated and varied. The concept of home and of a potential place where I could feel a sense of belonging

became increasingly intertwined with the perceptions I had of this ever-changing self. This journey of inner change became highly apparent during the making of the practical component, significantly influencing the overall direction of the piece. So it is for this reason, throughout this project, I explored my notion of self-identity in accordance to Homi Bhabha (1994) and Stuart Hall's (1996) definitions of identity, understanding it as a fluid, in flux, migrant who is able to navigate through cultural borders. I, therefore, have used the terms 'identity' and 'culture' as elements that relate to one another and play a part in understanding the definition of home.

The first person mode enabled me to capture and depict the nuances of the above definitions of home and incorporate aspects of them within my own film. I made use of techniques akin to the home-video genre such as personal archive footage and photography, interviews with family members within their own home environment and interviews with friends within my own home. In his book "There's No Place Like Home Video" (2002), James Moran brings forward the idea that the medium of home video does more than capture family practices and rituals such as birthdays and wedding celebrations. Home video, he suggests, documents the changes in cultural conceptions of the notion of home.

Filming my family members in Recife and in their own homes, allowed me to capture and reflect upon the generational differences existent between us. The domestic set up of my interviews allowed me to explore how the domestic dynamic and family ideology had dramatically changed from their generation to mine. The scenes following my great-auntie Aline in her kitchen, preparing meals, repairing the house; my grandmother in her bathroom doing her hair and make-up routine while telling stories of how her father prevented her from following her dream of becoming a flight attendant; my great-auntie Aracy in her garden sharing her experience of marrying at a young age in order to be able to leave home, depicted a generation of women shaped and affected by patriarchal structures of behaviour.

In contrast, my personal segments of on camera shots connoted the freedoms of a young, single, immigrant woman residing on her own, with no children who was able

to pursue a desired career. The generational divide between my family's experiences and mine contributed to an overall feeling of disconnection, not only with them, but also with the place I associated with them, in this case, the city of Recife.

In comparison to the interviews with family members, my friend's contributions took place in my house in Curitiba and Brighton. Due to the close relationships I hold with my friends, my personal spaces felt like an extension of their own homes. These personal spaces were places they too had spent a significant amount of time in and had helped form shared memories and experiences. My friends felt comfortable and safe sharing their personal stories and opinions with me in my environment, as to them, it also felt homely and familiar. In this instance, the concept of home shunned away from merely geographical or material definitions. James Moran (2002) highlights the concept of 'families we choose' as presented by Kath Weston (2002, p.47) stating that our ideas of family can go beyond bloodlines, and through life, we find a sense of family and home within different contexts such as the workplace, universities and neighbourhoods. In constructing my images of home, the presence of my friends was fundamental, as regardless of where we were physically, our connections and friendships always formed a feeling of home.

Transnational spaces and cultural hybridity

Unable to find a place that resonated with me in my own country and with a restless desire to see the world, I left Brazil at the age of 18 and relocated to the UK. What was meant initially to be a period of six months at a language school, instead became a ten-year life experience. This intercultural experience plays a key role, influencing my stylistic choices and cinematic strategies as a filmmaker. During the making of this documentary, issues of culture, identity and home were brought to light through the interviews with friends and family members and the process of self-inscription. To establish my position as the narrator and subject of the film, it was necessary for me to understand the nature of my own identity from the perspective of someone who moved away from her home country at a young age. This meant that I had to address the concept of transnationality within film, as highlighted by Higbee and Lim:

Such a cinema can be defined as transnational in the sense that it brings into question how fixed ideas of a national film culture are constantly being transformed by the presence of protagonists (and indeed film-makers) who have a presence within the nation, even if they exist on its margins, but find their origins quite clearly beyond it. (2010, p. 7)

Exploring the concept of transnationality, and how I identified within this, allowed me to navigate between both a native and a foreign perspective. This dual perspective enabled me to depict Brazil through a filmic viewpoint that provided a new angle from which the issue of mass movements in the country could be discussed. While at the same time contributing to an understanding of how issues of transnationality can come to inform and influence the narrative structure of a first person documentary.

First-person documentary

Originally, I did not set out to produce a film in the format of a first person narrative. The filming of the protests was an unplanned and spontaneous decision. I had no intention of putting myself forward on camera or as a narrator of the film. Instead, I intended for the story to be told through the lens of my family members and friend's points of view. However, I had to recognise that there were many complex personal elements embedded within my process of making the film. My close relationship with the film's participants, my return to my home country and my personal engagement with the mass movements, were all key aspects that had to be incorporated into the film. Conceiving the narrative in the format of a first person documentary allowed me to express and imprint my own personal feelings and experiences while exploring documentary as a tool for research. This was a process full of conflict and tensions, which raised internal questions and issues that provoked me to further explore and deconstruct the notion of my self-identity. The methodologies used in the production of this film triggered a personal journey that led to a deeper exploration of my idea of self, home, culture and the forged relationships that help form these.

This form of cinematic practice originated in North America and Western Europe and gained notoriety during the 1960s and 1970s, a period that saw an increase in public debates about identity politics and culture (Yu, 2018, p.4). World-renowned

documentary theorist Michael Renov (2004) argued that advances in technology and the wide spread availability of video cameras in the late 1970s inspired and enabled a larger number of filmmakers and artists to point the camera inward. This was a technique that shone light onto a highly personal narrative style, and focused on the multi-layered characteristics of the concept of self, illuminating the aspect of subjectivity within the realm of documentary. Renov stated that this style of film had a highly reflexive, confessional tone, which he then went on to refer to as 'filmic autobiography'.

In her work, *The personal camera: subjective cinema and the essay film*, Laura Rascaroli (2009) coins the term 'personal cinema' to make reference to films that use the first person and revolve around the self, including self-portraiture and diary films. The works of Alisa Lebow (2012) corroborate Michael Renov's argument, showing how first person films are often not just about a singular self, but rather a self that is located within a wider collective of history and identity. Lebow refers to this phenomenon as 'first person plural' and the 'cinema of we' (2012, p.3). The practice created for this project made use of first person documentary strategies. To evaluate this, I drew upon scholarly debates on autoethnography, filmic autobiography and personal cinema within the written work. Although very similar in their foundations, autobiography, auto-ethnography and first person films differ in their overall narrative structure and filmic aims. Unlike autobiography, first person and auto-ethnography documentaries do not necessarily revolve entirely around the filmmaker's self.

I have used a first person voice as a means of self-inscription, reflexivity and performance within the film, in order to explore a broader topic. It is not a film about me, but rather a channel for my subjective interpretation and viewpoint regarding the events that took place in Brazil in June 2013.

To construct the documentary's storyline, I used a combination of methodologies. I utilised private family archive footage, as well as historical archive imagery from Brazil's past, as a way to inform and shape the film's story. By combining both, I was able to trace a parallel and highlight tensions, differences and changes between past

and present. Through balancing archival footage with elements of first person narration and music, I sought to create sequences that could make the audience feel a part of historical and personal moments. I also made use of semi-structured interviews with friends and family, while additionally incorporating observational footage and eye witness accounts of the protests. Inspired by the modern techniques of YouTubers in their creation of daily style vlogs, I made use of stop motion and collage-style cutaways to illustrate the ever-evolving character of first-person filmmaking. This enabled me to explore how technologies and social media provide new methods of self-inscription that transform user's daily routines and lives into narratives.

Cycles of mass movements in Brazil

When the protests of 2013 emerged, I realised that it was the first time that I, a thirty-year-old woman, had ever witnessed a mass political movement within my country. This was very peculiar and unique to Brazil as neighbouring Argentina and Chile, who struggled with similar socio-economic issues, seemed to experience large public demonstrations and political acts far more frequently. I acknowledge that smaller scale social movements had been taking place in peripheral areas of Brazil for a long period; however, for the purposes of this research, I decided to focus on the less frequent cycles of larger mass protests. The magnitude of the 2013 protests instilled a curiosity within me that drove me to want to explore the reasons that underpinned large-scale social movements in Brazil. I wished to understand their trigger points, how they came to form, what their outcomes were and why I had not seen protests of this scale in Brazil before.

I have applied the concept of 'cycles of protests' as brought forward by Sydney Tarrow (1998) to the Brazilian mass movements. In doing so, I was able to explore how the cycles I focused on correlated and connected. In 1984, the first cycle of large-scale protests took place and played a key role in the country's slow transition towards a democratic regime. As someone who was born in the late 1980s, I was part of a generation who neither experienced the collapse of the military dictatorship nor witnessed the influence of the pro-democracy mass movement *Diretas Ja* (Direct Elections Now, 1984) on its downfall.

The majority of those involved in the 1992 mass movement cycle *Caras Pintadas* (Painted Faces) were young, middle class students, seeking to fight the scandalous corruption involving the then president, Fernando Collor. Brazilians demanded that the integrity and efficiency of the recently instated pillars of democracy be improved.

The twenty-year gap between the 1992 and 2013 political movements intrigued me. During this time, Brazil experienced significant progress in socio-economic matters, yet education, the public health system and crime prevention policies were overlooked, and there was the ongoing underlying issue of political corruption. These elements were not being fully addressed or questioned during this seemingly positive period.

Using documentary film to reflect on the phenomenon of the 2013 social movements was an ambitious and challenging task. To better understand why so many people of my generation (young middle-class students) had never participated in social movements before, I decided to interview two of my closest friends. I chose my friends as subjects because we had shared similar upbringings and held similar interests and opinions. The nature of our relationships made the interview process a very open, engaging and informative one, allowing us to discuss and question the political paradigms in which we had been brought up.

To trace back historical mass movements before 2013, I interviewed the matriarchs of my family. My grandmother and great-aunties provided a subjective insight into a past I was only familiar with through books. The process of interviewing them was an extremely challenging one for me, both as a filmmaker and on a personal level. The making of this documentary gave me the chance to spend quality time with them, to gain a more personal insight into their lives through asking questions about their past experiences, both personal and political. It became an opportunity to get to know them on a more intimate level; however, the experience left me conflicted. The realisation of this intimacy was that I struggled to understand their beliefs and points of view, which left me with a feeling of being unable to truly connect further with

them on a deeper level. I have explored the emotional impact and effect of choosing family members and friends as the subjects of my film throughout this thesis.

One of my aims with this study was to also to explore and highlight the importance of the 2013 demonstrations within Brazil's recent history. These social movements had a significant political impact upon a generation that had, up until then, seemed voiceless. In the initial stages of making this film, I believed I was offering a platform to those who were present during the protests to showcase and reflect upon their understanding of citizenship and democracy, under the backdrop of social movements. As the construction of the film narrative evolved and took shape, I realized that the process of trying to give people a voice had instead shifted and refocused the narrative onto me. This resulted in me finding, and putting forward, my voice as a young, migrant filmmaker. Through my first hand, personal account, my belief then is that this research offers valuable insight into the challenges, but also rich possibilities, associated with being a transnational subject who experienced protests that were unprecedented in my lifetime. The 2013 social movements had major societal effects, and the making of a first person documentary enabled me to locate these not only within my own experiences but also within my friend's and family's experiences.

The written exegesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter addresses the processes of development of my filmmaking practice. I reflect upon the use of creative documentary as a medium for research. I also analyse the use of first person narrative and autobiography techniques in the exploration of concepts of transnationalism, cultural hybridity, family and home. I highlight how the first person mode enables the filmmaker to address wider, social issues through individual experience.

The second chapter charts the historical trajectory of Brazil against the backdrop of the 1964 coup and three decades of military dictatorship, the 1984 *Diretas Ja* movement, the subsequent process of re-democratisation and the 1992 *Caras Pintadas* movement. In 2013, over 30 years since Brazil experienced its last large social movement, public demonstrations erupted all over Brazil, triggered by a rise of-20

cents on public transport fares and fuelled by frustrations about government spending on the run-up to the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games. This chapter explores the reasons behind the 1984 and 1992 movements, analysing why and how they formed, before then moving on to analyse the 2013 protests and their aftermath. It expands on the emergence and structure of these protests to consider their trigger points, key participants and organisational methods. I delve into issues underpinning and highlighting the state of Brazil's fragile, young democracy and discuss the concept of alienation, in order to explore the arguments raised by the subjects in the film.

In the third chapter, I explore the ways a new generation of YouTube filmmakers have deployed first-person driven narrative techniques and cinematic tropes to produce daily vlogs. I expand on how they apply these strategies as a way to represent and perform their own ideas of self and question how their techniques can be translated onto documentary and filmic work. With reference to contemporary videoblogger's work, I describe the tropes I chose to use within my film. I expand on the matter of collectiveness through a discussion of the online organisational structures of the protests of 2013. Finally, I locate my own film within Latin American Cinema, exploring the concepts of '*Cinema Novo*' and '*Third Cinema*'.

Chapter 4 gives an account of the outcomes of this practice-led research project, evaluating how the practice created for this project contributed to first-person documentary theory. In this chapter, I foreground the challenges faced during the inception, production and post-production processes of the film. This highlights how the construction of a first person driven narrative, enabled a reflection upon the broader issue of mass movements in Brazil.

Chapter 1

Investigating the Possibilities of First Person Documentary

This chapter offers an amalgamation between theory and emotional engagement, exploring the development of the methodology processes that took shape within the film. I started this project with raw footage of the June 2013 protests, filmed without an initial agenda or idea as to how, or even if, I would eventually construct a narrative. As I began to revise and piece the footage together, I realised that my involvement in the mobilisations was deeper than just capturing footage of the events. The protests affected me on an emotional level, to which I felt deeply committed and connected to the causes and the people I had encountered in the streets of Brazil during that time of crisis. I implemented the first person method as a way to explore the underlining reasons that enticed me to participate and engage with the movements. These reasons were beyond any sort of filmic or professional ambitions. The construction of a first person narrative allowed me to go on a deeply personal journey, enabling me to utilise my individual experience to reflect upon the magnitude and social impact of the 2013 demonstrations.

The process of producing a film in the format of a first person narrative means the story is heavily embedded in an element of the personal. As Anette Kuhn observes:

...a part of me also 'knows' that my experience - my memories my feelings - are important because these things make me what I am, make me different from everyone else. Must they be consigned to a compartment separate from the part of me that thinks and analyses?
(2002, p.33)

1.1 First person narrative construction

Throughout its three years of production, the film presented me with numerous hurdles. On a technical level, I was faced with the challenges of creating a film independently, requiring me to take on multiple roles including those of researcher, director, producer, interviewer, narrator and editor. On a personal level, the film was serving as a mirror for self-reflection, requiring me to face and question difficult truths and facts about myself, family, friends and culture.

My methodology therefore comprises theories that reference subjectivity in film, as well as use of the first person and self-inscription within documentary practices. It draws upon the works of Stella Bruzzi, Alisa Lebow, Catherine Russell, Barbash and Taylor, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Hubert Herman, Michael Renov as well as the work of Agnieszka Piotrowski. Both Renov and Piotrowski foreground the importance of psychoanalysis in film theory throughout their bodies of work and this is an element that I also find present in, and that has relevance to, my own theoretical practice approach.

Autoethnography is also one of the methodologies chosen for this study and I make reference to Catherine Russell and the works of Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams & Arthur P. Bochner. First person documentary and autoethnographic research overlap, having a very similar ethos and implications within academic contexts. Documentary films, in their essence, contain elements of ethnography and although ethnographic films hold features of their own, they are still situated to some extent in the documentary practice realm (Barbash and Taylor, 1998, p.5). The autobiographical characteristics that assisted in shaping the first-person narrative style of my research contributed to the complex tones of identity politics. There were questions about my selfhood, history, home nation and generations of my family and these foregrounded the challenges I faced as a filmmaker who was also the subject of the film:

Autobiography becomes ethnographic at the point where the film, or video maker, understands their personal history to be implicated into the larger social formations and historical processes. Identity is no longer a transcendental or essential self that is revealed but is instead a "staging of subjectivity" – a representation of the self as a performance. (Russell, 1999, p.25)

My transnational position assisted in forming the subjectivity of my film, representing the conflicted part of my self that was experiencing the 2013 protests whilst seeking to understand the experience as a part of a wider social crisis. My transnational self was prominent, coming to the forefront and performing on camera to construct the narrative.

1.2 The conundrum of self-inscription

The construction of the film's narrative demanded an element of intrinsic self-reflection and a meditation on my purpose and goals in reaching its completion. It required me to analyse the concepts of home and self. This challenged me to undertake an autoethnographic journey of my own, in order to address components that formed the foundations of the person that I am today. In order to create a first-person narrative, it became evident that I would have to evaluate the context and standpoint of my own status. As a middle-class Brazilian woman who had made the choice to leave her native country and spend the last decade in a western country, I needed to address how this experience influenced the making of the documentary.

My film speaks from a place of truth, which is personal, structured through my point of view and reflects upon a reality that is heavily biased and subjective in its depiction. *Brazil in Progress: Talking About My Generation* is not, however, an autobiographical piece, although elements akin to that genre are present. My aim with the film was to locate myself as both subject in and of the practice (Renov, 2004, p.24), whilst at the same time being a supporting character who helps reveal the main story. It is through my point of view that the audience is introduced to the events that took place in the streets of Brazil in 2013, whilst being taken on a journey through the country's historical mass movements as depicted by my family members and friends. I speak from a first person perspective that delves into autobiographical aspects, yet I have not made autobiography the film's focus. Through my personal experiences, I have been able to contextualise and add depth to the story. I took on the role of an active observer, witnessing and translating my experiences onto film. As Alisa Lebow in her introduction to the book *The cinema of me* says:

First Person filmmaking goes further, well beyond the self, focusing its sights on another as the 'protagonist', the main attraction, and 'subject' of the film, be it a lover, icon, nemesis, relative, friend, or some larger collectivity. (2012, p.3)

Overcoming the challenges posed in building a first person narrative format was a far more complex endeavour than initially anticipated. I had to come to terms with my subjectivity and positioning in the making of the documentary, recognizing the

complicated nuances of the concept of self. The layers of this concept would come to influence the aesthetics of the practice. It was important to understand the complex storytelling artefacts associated with the process of putting together a first person narrative based on an underlying autoethnographic, reflexive tone. In order to be both the filmmaker and subject of this piece, it was necessary for me to become conscious of my own idea of self and perceive my personal identity as fragmented.

Stuart Hall, in *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1996), observed the intricate ways in which the matter of identity is discussed and framed within post-modern society. Hall put forward three different conceptions of identity, that of the Enlightenment subject, sociological subject and post-modern subject (Hall, 1996, p.275). He described the Enlightenment subject as a concept in which one's identity is fundamentally linked to one's individuality. Here, the essence of the self lies at the core of the human individual and remains fundamentally the same from birth onwards. In the context of the sociological subject, identity interconnects a person's inner essence to the exterior social and cultural influences that come to play a role in their alignment with the self. This involves placing the subject within the cultural boundaries they inhabit, where both elements exist harmoniously and symbiotically, becoming unified. Hall expanded on the notion of the post-modern subject by describing identity as unfixed, constantly in flux and always in motion, continually mutating according to one's exposure to socio-cultural practices:

The fully unified, completed, secured and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with – at least temporarily. (Hall, 1996, p.277)

Hubert Herman (2001) contributed to the work of Stuart Hall by stating that the notion of culture is indeed embedded within the broad spectrum of the concept of self. Herman put forward the theory of a 'dialogical self'. He stated that it was not possible for one to speak of a self that is whole, unitary and unchangeable within the context of a globalised world able to offer unlimited possibilities of movement that blur spatial and cultural boundaries. Herman's concept of a dialogical self involves the need to

take into account the different perspectives of the self in relation to cultural mixing, social aspects and the other. This acknowledges the ways different inner selves are capable of entering dialogue and communicating with one another, consequently enabling the existence of what can be described as an *I-position*: “The person who constructs I-positions - does that from the starting point of some specific location within one’s psychological field.” (Valsiner, 2000, p.6)

Hubert observed that these voices, often in articulation within the self, allow for a variety of ways of constructing meanings of selfhood. I bring forward both the concept of the post-modern subject as proposed by Stuart Hall, and the notion of I-position, to provide the framework in which to position myself within this piece, enabling me to build the film’s narrative. To self-inscribe within this documentary meant I would have to verbalise the dialogue of my own inner voices. Finding a way to place myself in the cinematic discourse, personified as both the filmmaker and the subject, allowed me to discover what facet of myself would need to come to light in order to take a stance.

It was almost as if I needed to search deeply within the compartmentalised areas of my own identity in order to select which elements of my voice would take the reins in this practice. As a documentary filmmaker, I was capable of capturing the demonstrations of June 2013 through the viewpoint of someone who identified with and was perceived as a native of that community. I was speaking to them in their native mother tongue and engaging in cultural practices and a level of communication familiar and recognizable to me. On the surface, all evidence suggested that I would be able to do this research from an inside-to-outside perspective. This unique perspective would present me with an ‘insider-angle’ viewpoint, allowing me to investigate the social aspects of Brazil’s large-scale social movements through first hand experiences. However, as the fieldwork progressed, I began to realise that due to my own life experiences I now felt somewhat alienated and no longer integrated with Brazil’s cultural, social and behavioural norms.

Adams, Bochner and Ellis (2011) pointed out that autoethnographic work is made possible due to the ethnographer’s identification with a particular cultural identity.

They argued that through the personal, one could go onto expose different features of cultural practices, which could then be showcased to both insiders and outsiders. My aim with this documentary was precisely to do this. My upbringing had engrained elements that made it possible for me to identify with Brazilian culture. However, after years of living in England and making social adjustments to western culture, I now felt like an outsider and this realisation presented me with a new shift in perspective.

Once analysed this perspective brought me to the conclusion that I was facing the possibility of experiencing and producing the entire project from a more centralised, middle-grounded position: an entity on the cusp of being both an insider and an outsider. This ongoing internal push and pull dynamic paved the way for the tone of voice and direction in which I would end up taking the story. The 'I' aspect could therefore no longer be constructed solely from the initial viewpoint of a native Brazilian filmmaker. Instead, the structure of the documentary evolved into a combination of narratives told through the transnational voice present within my self.

Navigating this entangled web of multicultural identity proved to be a puzzling experiment. Understanding the processes and mechanisms of my transnational voice was a difficult feat to deal with on a daily basis. As my worldly voice grew and gradually shaped and become part of me, I began to shift and experience a plurality in cultural practices. The day-to-day synchronized negotiations between my own culture and the western society I was now inserted in meant more than just being torn between cultures. It added an ambivalent character to my identity (Bhatia and Ram, 2001, p.297). As I investigated this inner notion it became more apparent to me that I would have to peel away further layers of ambivalence and mediate the cultural hybridity now present within myself.

The challenge for the theory of a dialogical self is to explain how individuals coordinate their incompatible and often conflicting cultural and personal positions in the wake of transnational immigration, cultural dislocation and the hybridization of identity (Bhatia and Ram, 2001, p.298). Within the spectrum of a transnational, first person documentary cinema, finding a thread between these often polarized personal voices

and then incorporating them into cinematic language is an act that presents several challenges. The most difficult of these, for me, was precisely how to articulate and translate my own transnational element onto the foundations of my first person film. In this thesis, the concept of transnationalism refers to the ability of the migrant to sustain ties with both native home and host society. Ehrkamp and Leitner state:

Contemporary migrants participate simultaneously in different spheres of life in the areas of both origin and destination at multiple geographic scales, and that they identify with and are able to hold multiple allegiance of territories, ethnic, religious communities, and families across national border. (2006, p.1593)

Transnational experiences are heterogeneous and vary according to notions of identity, mobility, gender, class and multiple other factors. This written work focuses on my personal experiences as a young, transnational Brazilian woman and therefore identifies with age, gender and nationality.

As someone who had not initially fully comprehended the intricacies of creating a documentary from a transnational perspective, I struggled as to how I would imprint the diversities of my self-identity within the narrative. However, after much self-reflection, I believed I was able to overcome these challenges. Through the selective use of cinematic language and storytelling techniques, I strove to find an individual perspective, piecing together a narrative I felt successfully communicated the story through the qualities of a transnational filmmaker.

1.3 Constructing my 'I' narrator

Living for the most part of my life in a country other than my own has in essence deconstructed my primary childhood characteristics and habitual traits. Coming into contact with a variety of nationalities, cultures and belief systems has personally led me to become someone who no longer fits within the societal parameters I was originally brought up in. The ten years I have resided in Britain do not in any way make me British, nor do they make me less Brazilian. Yet I often found myself facing many difficulties in relating to both cultures. This raised conflicting feelings of inner

negotiation, comprising together a duality of feeling foreign in a place I once called home and being foreign in a place I had consciously chosen as home.

This unsettling sense of being in-between created a restlessness and deep underlying feeling of belonging neither here nor there. According to Homi Bhabha in his work *The Location of Culture* (1994), this particular sensation creates room for individuals and communities to exist in a floating space that originates from the merging of different cultures one has been exposed to. Bhabha refers to this as 'the third space', something I can wholeheartedly identify with. Based on my own personal experiences I would describe my own third space as a place in which you are home, but not at home and, it will never be a home. Therefore cultural hybridity is not static, but rather an ongoing process, in constant mutation. Both Hubert Herman and Bhabha suggest an examination of what is at the border of cultural practices and identities in order to create and resignify cultural meanings. He goes on to say that: "This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy." (Bhabha, 1994, p.4)

The culture into which I was born is characteristically hybrid by nature. Often described as a melting pot of ethnicity, Brazil's multitude of indigenous tribes and colonisation by a range of nationalities created a vibrant diversity that can be witnessed throughout the country's mix of race, dialect and rituals. Brazilian sociologist and historian Gilberto Freyre described the influence of European and African culture in shaping Brazilian identity in his work *Masters and the Slaves* (1933). This miscegenation in the country varies from state to state. This can be seen in movements such as the influx of Eastern European Jewish settlers in southern Brazil during the late 1920s as well as in the arrival of enslaved people forcibly taken to north-east Brazil up until the mid-19th century. This diverse cultural miscegenation was an influence on the way I portrayed my own heritage and roots within the documentary. I felt the need to place my family members and myself as people who were exposed and shaped predominantly by the culture of north-east Brazil. Exploring the '*Nordestino*' (north-east) element meant that I could better contextualise these aspects of self and family when constructing the documentary's narrative. This process

was not only for the audience but also for my own self-identification and cultural purposes. It enabled me to reflect key elements more accurately within the story.

Recife, one of the largest capitals in north-east Brazil, has been a place that has struggled with socioeconomic disparity for many years. Throughout history the north-east of Brazil has been overlooked by the government and as a result is severely underdeveloped compared to other areas of the country. My own family roots and origins are heavily tied to Recife. My grandmother and great-aunties were born on the outskirts of the city in small villages that existed on the brink of poverty. The hardship of growing up in these poor peripheral communities during this period was coupled with outdated hierarchal social systems where women had few or no rights. This posed a somewhat suppressed and pressurised environment for many women, who were often under the strong hold of the male figures in their lives. Husbands, fathers and brothers were often seen as the family dictators. The matriarchs of my family had their upbringing influenced by a societal set of values that placed them in a position of domesticity, invisibility and placidness. Their experiences as young women living through a military dictatorship compounded and even reinforced the way their opinions and behaviours were shaped.

Establishing this as the backdrop in which their lives unfolded made it possible for me to highlight some of the factors that shaped their ideologies, identities and point of views. In many ways these elements came to impact the development of my own idea of self profoundly. As a young woman leaving my country with the principles taught to me by my mother, the differences in cultural upbringing quickly became apparent when observing women in western culture.

The principles underpinning my family's style of upbringing had been passed on cyclically throughout generations, particularly amongst the women in my family. My grandmother raised my mother according to the same ethos and ideas that she had been raised with, and my mother applied these to me in turn. In order to construct my personal narrative within the film, it was necessary for me to recognise that my

identity and my storytelling processes were also heavily determined by the element of gender.

Originally, I did not set out to produce a film that focused on female interviewees and their personal political stances and perceptions. However, in interviewing my family and friends I was able to see that there was an underlining common denominator that connected our political experiences (or possible lack thereof). Gender overdetermined all of our individual narratives and subsequently shaped our subjective experiences (Kehily, 1995, p.30). There were commonalities within all of our storylines that were fundamentally present due to our gender. This can be seen in the segment of the film where we discuss our fears and doubts about participating and attending large-scale protests in Brazil. We all felt unsafe and fundamentally scared about attending these protests. We were all aware of how violent these demonstrations had become due to the police brutality and government retaliation towards the protesters. This consequently influenced our decisions either to stop attending, or not to attend these demonstrations to begin with.

This feeling of insecurity was not foreign to me. My mother, grandmother and great aunties taught me morals and values that instilled in me a particular character of obedience and placidity. The influence of these ideals on my own upbringing instilled me with a subdued, linear political perception. The deconstruction of these initial ideas and beliefs engrained within me depicted and shaped the direction of the project, bringing into effect a 'cinema of we' (Lebow, 2012). As a result, the creation of the 'I' illustrated throughout the film could not have been done without the participation of my family and childhood friends who, in their own way, rekindled light on who I once was and who I had now become.

1.4 Translating my self and language into film

Upon my relocation to England, I was faced with the realisation that in order to establish a new home for myself, I needed to adapt and open myself up to new ways of being, allowing elements of the culture I was brought up with to subside. At first this was a difficult prospect for me to come to terms with. Under these circumstances,

there is often a tendency for immigrants to find themselves in communities with similar backgrounds. They meet, form homes away from home and congregate into similar ethnic alliances. This then places them into familiar cohabiting circumstances which, depending on their personal experiences, either allows them to adapt to a new environment or places them within the foundations of the 'the third Space', as described by Bhabha.

As a young, single, female immigrant, I made a personal choice not to seek the Brazilian communities within the UK. I felt that in order to integrate myself optimally into the workings of this new society, it would be more agreeable to exist day to day in the same format as the surrounding culture. Part of my initial motivation for coming to England was to discover and experience new ways of living, people and language. Immersing myself fully within British society presented me with an opportunity to learn not only about others but also myself. This ignited a process that then required me to consciously transmute aspects of my former cultural upbringing in order to adapt.

In order to depict this process in the film I chose to put myself on camera, using the English language for the voiceover that would guide the story. I felt that this illustrated the long process of assimilation into British culture that I had gone through. For many years I experienced feelings of personal insecurity and anxiety associated with day-to-day interaction and verbal communication as I attempted to articulate myself. At times, what was being portrayed in my mind would not match or eloquently and coherently verbalise what I wished to say. Many English words, phrases and enunciation do not exist in Portuguese. This created challenges in the form of vocabulary, language barriers, pronunciation and subsequent interpretation. For example, simple words such as grapefruit, world and squirrel did not always flow freely. This may sound comical, but it highlights the basic complexities of supposedly 'simple' communication. As an immigrant, you are expected to comply with the norms of the host country. The act of speaking the language becomes an integral part of the process of integration:

An immigrant is assimilated only when he speaks the language of his new country by preference, had adopted its customs, and when his general conduct and way of life, become those of his new compatriots and his original outlook gives way to that of his new surroundings. (Bunle, 1950, p.6)

Narrating the film in English and not Portuguese was a method I used to connote a story pieced together by someone who had been exposed to a culture different to her own for many years. Using English as the chosen voiceover language was a way to imprint an element of transnationality into the film. It served as a narrative device that aimed to situate me as both the subject in-and-of the documentary. Utilising my voice, accent and perception not only communicated my own cultural duality but also allowed me to construct my 'I' narrator as a filmmaker. As a result, I was able to portray the socio-political issues of a Latin country in a format that was more accessible to a western audience.

Subtitling and translating language and action at times proved to be an arduous task. Even though I would consider myself to have fluent and full understanding of both idioms, I occasionally struggled to find words that would bridge the language barrier and suit the meaning of what the subjects had to say in particular scenes. For example, my grandmother and great-aunties would often use dialects found only in the region of north-east Brazil. These unique linguistic references, although recognisable in native Portuguese, bear no relationship to English. I therefore needed to draw upon my own childhood cultural experiences in order to relate it to the western culture I was now integrated into. Extensively questioning English-speaking connotations enabled me to give meaning to the sentences being articulated by my relatives, as Eliana Franco says, 'many of the translating decisions, however, seem to be determined not by genre-specific factors, but by the host culture' (1998, p.234).

1.5 Performing a transnational self

The inscribing of cultural experience with strong elements of transnationalism enabled me to construct a narrative about returning home. The representation of my self

within the documentary was performative, as in order for me to make a documentary that aligned with my transnationality, I felt I had to embody a self that depicted aspects relevant to the narrative. Stella Bruzzi very succinctly stated that “documentaries are performative acts” (2000, p.7). The act of making a first person film whilst being its subject is what Bruzzi described as a “doing” documentary. I put myself forward to undertake the role of someone on a quest for political understanding and reconnection to the idea of home so that I would be able to achieve this. I performed the roles of transnational filmmaker, director, presenter, native citizen, international researcher, granddaughter and friend so that, when combined, these would bring a unique insight and perspective to the broader subject.

The act of self-inscribing within my own work, applying structures of first person driven narratives, allowed me to negotiate which self I was going to put forward in making this practice. This self would be constructed and performed according to my personal discourse. Haseman (2006, p.7) stated that practice-led works are also a type of ‘performative research’ and Bauman (in Lincoln and Denzin, 2003, p.451) claimed that the performativity framework allows for researchers to provide a wider sense of cultural and social context, through focusing on personal narratives. Performance and the self are at the heart of documentary film and consequently of my methodology and this practice work as a whole. In order to understand my own subjectivity and approach to using first person filmic strategies, I had to come to terms with the fact that my personal story and my status within the UK placed me in the category of a transnational filmmaker. This transnational quality was heavily present within both the methodology and the outcomes of this research.

Initially, I believed that self-inscribing within my documentary would create issues in finding a firm place within the genre of transnational documentary. Often depicted as ‘dystopic’ and ‘dysphoric’ experiences (Naficy, 2003) some transnational documentaries have been seen as journeys of exile, triggered by the need to flee or by an endangerment. This can be seen in the documentary *Cheb* (Rachid Bouchareb, 1991). But we can also interpret transnational cinema in the terms of Hamid Naficy, as: “...utopian and euphoric possibilities driven by wanderlust, or better yet, by what in

German is called *Fernweh*, which means not only wanderlust but also a desire to escape from one's own homeland" (2003, p.207). This approach helps me to comprehend my motivation, which took shape in my desire to return home, interpreting the film as one that has a place in the transnational genre.

Naficy explained how transnational filmmakers occupy transnational spaces similar to Homi Bhabha's (1994) 'third space'. To be in a transnational space is not to belong to any of these spaces, neither the homeland nor the host country. To be transnational is to have the ability to navigate through both spaces, to be in both or none of them at the same time. Transnationality then becomes a fluid process. Naficy claimed that transnational filmmakers can find themselves having "zeniths of confidence and nadirs of despondency and doubts" (2003, p.208). I have had many such moments throughout the making of this film. Finding my approach and my personal voice as a transnational filmmaker, never really understanding where or if I truly belonged somewhere, made this method a challenging one.

1.6 The different versions of my film

Coming to grips with the idea of a self that is in constant flux (Hall, 1996) is a challenge on its own. The internal negotiation and construction process involved in mediating that changing character of self identity, through the use of storytelling techniques, makes it all the more difficult. My attempts to find stable ground within the making of the practice resulted in me constructing three differing edits of the same content.

The first edit predominantly involved me fully immersing myself as both the narrator and primary character of the film. This gave it a somewhat autobiographical feel, focusing mainly on my personal journey and story rather than portraying the underlying wider socio-political message I wanted to communicate. This therefore failed to achieve the purpose of the research.

In the second edit I attempted to remove myself from the story completely. By inserting my own voice minimally and allowing the main characters to lead the storyline, the second edit took on the format of a more traditional interview-based

piece. By primarily focusing on the interviewees' personal stories lines the edit once again failed to outline the broader socio-political issues and did not adequately follow the relevant narrative.

These two versions, although polar opposites made up of the same content, both lacked depth and an adherence to the original narrative. Honouring the original objective of the story was a vital element missing in both pieces. In the third and final edit, I was able to find the balance I had been searching for in my previous two attempts. I combined the elements of my voice and story with the perspectives of my family and friends and people who were actively present within the social movements. The viewer was now guided through historical events via a multitude of insightful viewpoints. This exposed them to uniquely diverse experiences that combined into a singular narrative, therefore achieving the perspective I was striving for.

As a way to illustrate the fragments of these meaningful relationships that were a significant part of my upbringing, I decided to make use of personal archive footage and photos. I sought to do so as a way to provide a contrast in the film, depicting and anchoring memories of who I was when growing up in Brazil, with who I was as the maker of this piece. I also used archive footage as a framing tool, providing a historical context for the film and enabling me to analyse and highlight the differences and similarities between the 1984 and 1992 movements. The archive footage used then served a higher purpose than that of mere illustration for my historical segment (De Jong, 2012, p.236). It created juxtaposition between the movements mentioned above and the 2013 protests, allowing for a visual comparison of the organizational structure, symbols and ideology behind each movement.

1.7 Practice production: interviewing family

The first person mode of film enabled me to include the contributions of those who played key roles in my own personal development. I interviewed my great aunties, grandmother and close friends because they had a direct influence on my upbringing. First person autobiographical tropes allowed me to best capture and depict these highly personal emotional relationships. Belinda Smail (2010) argued that in order to

comprehend the role emotional connection plays between viewers and non-fiction films it is necessary to “discuss selves and the objects of their emotional attachments” (2010, p.16). This idea is very much linked to the notion of subjectivity within film, so I raise this as a way to contextualise and analyse the implications of having my family members and friends as subjects in my film. Smail’s body of work has mainly concentrated on the emotional response of the viewer when it comes to documentary film. I, on the other hand, aim to bring forward the difficulties and challenges involved when the attachment of the filmmaker are the supporting characters that assist in unravelling the story, as it was here with the participation of my grandmother, great aunties and friends. Smail discusses the psychoanalysis of Melanie Klein, who puts emphasis on object relations. Belinda claims that Klein’s body of theory is one that “has not been sufficiently explored in film studies, especially in respect to documentary” (2010, p.11). I believe that this is mainly due to the difficulty in research to assess, associate and correlate both thought and emotion as valid data within critical work.

Klein’s concept of object relations is one that refers to all entities and objects with whom an individual forms an emotional connection. To bring this principle into my own work involves recognising my own family and friends as the object relations within the context of the film. The process of working with loved ones as participants of a filmmaker’s project is challenging to say the least. One must potentially navigate emotional boundaries, find a line between intimate relations and professionalism and in this instance, it was necessary to find an angle that portrayed the true unprejudiced opinions of my own family whilst honouring the story. As Andres Di Tella expressed it:

To put into a film autobiographical substance, to sacrifice one’s own family, to expose intimacies of experience, all of that is ultimately a kind of public offering. (2012, p.35)

Throughout the film shoot I felt that the dynamic between my family and myself was becoming increasingly difficult. I struggled to find a space in which they could see me

merely as a filmmaker and I, in return, could see them merely as interviewees, detached from the emotion, family structure and personal ties.

After my extended time living abroad, I saw in this film an opportunity to reconnect with three of the most important women in my life. I was eager to find out about their opinions of the 2013 protests, as well as to question their engagement with and views on Brazil's previous social movements. Ultimately, I wanted to understand how their behaviours and ideologies had been transferred to me and to comprehend how and to what extent these were internalized by me due to their involvement in my upbringing and personal development. I resorted to the interview method in order to engage in conversation with them. I believed that a more relaxed, informal type of set-up would lead me to the answers I had been hoping to find.

My idea had been to shoot the interviews in two stages. The first would be a group set-up where we would communally discuss various topics. The second stage would consist of more intimate one-to-one exchanges. Both interview stages were undertaken inside the homes of my family members, at the place they felt most comfortable and at ease.

My initial approach in the interviews was to start off with a personal story, which is a technique often referred to as an icebreaker resource. It allows the subject to gradually let go of inhibitions or initial defence mechanisms that may be created due to the process of being filmed, and to open up generally. Once I had created a more comfortable, relaxed ambience I would then go on to ask more probing questions. All the while I would monitor the subjects' reactions, allowing them space to reflect and discuss, but also intervening and sharing my own viewpoints in an effort to generate debate and stimulate more elaborate responses.

I utilised the camera techniques of mid-shot length and centre framing because I wanted my interviewees to speak directly to the camera in an attempt to evoke a sense of confession. I wanted to elicit a feeling that would encourage them to open up to me, and me only. These techniques were successful in the second stage of the interviews where subjects were speaking individually to the camera, but did not deliver the results I was hoping for during the first group stage. I believed that as

participants, based on their experiences and our family connection, they would offer me deep insight into the issues I was exploring. In most respects my assumption was correct, however there were additional elements to this process that I did not foresee: the main one being the profound effect of their answers on me.

French filmmaker Jean Rouch stated that in his films the camera acted as a psychoanalytical stimulant, both “a mirror and a window” (Rouch in Renov, 2004, p.197). Post-analysis, Rouch’s statement was very relevant to the interview process in my film. Having my family members as contributors on camera meant that I would have the opportunity to bring forward questions I never had the chance to ask before. The result of this played out in the form of both mirror and window, as Rouch describes. Reflections of learnt behavioural patterns were exposed along with deep inner truths that I perhaps had not come to terms with up until then. These truths took the form of deconstructed gender norms and challenges to the idea of successfully reintegrating into what I once called home.

The psychoanalytical window stimulant also took its form during the interview process. I was stricken by my interviewee’s willingness and openness to share details and information about their lives, hopes and aspirations, many of which were completely new to me. The forthcoming nature of their answers and the personal details they shared with me took me by surprise. The window the camera now represented had given me a deeper access and insight into their inner beliefs and political opinions and into how those elements influenced their perception of the world around them. This led me to ask myself whether I would ever have had the opportunity or ability to gain access to these insights without the presence of my camera? Agnieszka Piotrowska drew attention to similarities between the act of interviewing and the ethos of psychoanalysis when she went on to question:

Why do people say things in front of the camera ‘they might not have said before’? The practitioners’ ‘unreliable’ accounts of their encounters with the subjects of their films are treated as anecdotes rather than perhaps crucial ‘auto ethnographic’ material worth studying or at least taking some note of.

(2014, p.31)

The interview process with my family members had shown me how little insight into their lives I had actually had. In particular it had shone light on how, despite being women in the same family, we processed and engaged with the political influence in Brazil differently. Although I found their opinions insightful, they had in effect opened my eyes to the fundamental divergence in views. This was largely based on the fact that they believed the Brazilian political dictatorship, which resulted in so much hardship over the years for so many, was actually a positive. They believed it to be a stable and necessary form of rule and viewed the protests as a form of rebellion and anarchy in relation to this stability. In their eyes, the youth of the country involved in the protests were nothing more than irrational, erratic and mindlessly out of control. There was almost a sense of nostalgia around their belief system that blinded them to the true purpose of the mobilisations. Instead, they wanted dictatorship rule and all that they had ever known under this to return and remain completely unchanged. Due to the generational gap between us, I expected a somewhat conservative political stance. However, the experience of their completely unwavering, blinkered conservativeness and unwillingness to adopt anything aside from this impacted the way I conducted the remainder of my interviews.

The closed-mindedness of their opinions detached me from my intention to reconnect with them. I felt a distance and almost a sense of wariness about investigating their responses further. Their linear, opinionated views made me cautious in my questioning and reshaped the entire interview. In order to not stretch their belief systems and potentially offend them or cause them to become defensive, I shifted my strategy. This resulted in me having to then switch from my role as family member learning about our family's past into a more cautious role, where I was now required to be a more diplomatic, formal interviewer. I found it difficult to question their statements, especially the ones I did not necessarily agree with. The fear and anxiety of potentially causing discomfort, disagreement or even upsetting the women who I had always seen as authority figures was very much present. I was always raised with a healthy respect for senior members of my family, so although these emotions were only present

subconsciously at this stage, I would often pause and ask myself 'was I going too far?' Professionally, I didn't share the opinions they were expressing and although open-minded as a filmmaker, this resulted in me emotionally withdrawing from the process. I now found myself further alienated from my goal of trying to portray the brutality of the dictatorship years and consequential protests in order to better educate the viewer and shine light for the audience. However, in taking the decision to include my family members, who I hoped would provide me with trusted insight and support for the narrative, they were instead communicating opposing views that thwarted my intentions entirely.

The question of ethics when interviewing family members is one that proved to be both a professional and personal challenge. I continually struggled to detach myself from the preconceived structure of hierarchy within the family. Michael Renov (2008) refers to this as 'domestic ethnography', describing it as a means of self-knowledge through the examination of family relations:

One senses that a very personal, indeed identity-forming, tale of family relations has been rendered in a form that evokes the tangled web of relationships and conflicting emotional valences. (2008, p.46)

My choice in inviting my relatives to be subjects meant there were many implications and politics within the family dynamic that needed to be considered before turning the camera on. I aimed to represent my family members in the same light I had seen them in whilst growing up. To me, they had always represented women of a nurturing, caring and understanding nature. Whilst they still possessed all of these characteristics, during the interview process their opinionated views had come across with an aura of frustration and authoritarianism, portraying a side of them that did not best represent their true qualities. In order to ensure I could interpret and communicate their true nature to the audience, whilst at the same time representing their opinions, I chose to utilise editing techniques that would harmonise these opposing aspects of their personalities. Whilst constructing the film's narrative I intercalated the political content with their personal stories. Reliving emotive memories that were dear to them would create an emotional engagement with the

audience. Their background stories also helped visually soften the hardship and brutality that was being seen in the country during the dictatorship years, as reflected in the archive footage. Through my family's stories, I was able to show the viewer that despite the darkness around them, life prevailed. People remained optimistic, hopeful and continued to create fond memories and dreams that balanced the hardships surrounding them. My family's political opinions are a product of the environment they grew up in and will always be part of them. By combining these with their heartfelt memories I believe I was successful in bringing a more humanised, softer depiction of them.

1.8 Interviewing friends

The process of interviewing my close friends for this project felt like a less arduous one. The nature of my research as a documentary practice allowed me to breach conventional norms of qualitative interview methods. Instead of attempting to remain unbiased and keep a distance from my subject matter, I was required to look even closer, exploring the depths of our friendships and reflecting upon the emotional engagement involved in having my friends as participants in my research. This emotional reflexivity, I believe, enriched the content of my film. The interviews with Amanda and Mariana had an opposite effect on me compared to the interviews with my family members. I felt more at liberty to openly discuss the 2013 movements with them, feeling understood and non-judged when raising matters such as political apathy, lack of participation and confusion towards Brazil's political systems. My friends and I belonged to the same generation, gender and socioeconomic group; we shared childhood experiences and similar beliefs. Their presence in the documentary allowed me to illustrate and pinpoint the differences between my generation and my family's.

1.9 Knowledge production in documentary film

Bill Nichols' definition of documentary as a 'discourse of sobriety' (2001, p.39) is embedded in the assumption that documentary film has at its heart the intent of reproducing knowledge without the excessive use of storytelling artefacts. Nichols puts forward the term 'epistophilia' (2001, p.40), which in its essence means a desire

and appreciation for knowledge. Nichols recognises the predisposition of documentarian practices to depict the social world. He sees a correlation between the content of the film and the viewer's desire to assimilate the knowledge presented to them in order to expand their understanding of the subject (appreciation). From a personal perspective, portraying a narrative that embodied the subject of mass movements in Brazil involved depicting the social aspect of this reality through real life events and personal accounts. This approach would enable a viewer to acquire knowledge of this subject, which was previously underexplored.

Whilst I consider documentary to be a powerful visual tool to transmit knowledge, I am also fully aware of the biased aspects of its nature and of how these can be translated visually. The constructed realities portrayed on film are crafted entirely from the viewpoint of the creator(s), meaning that the viewer is subject to what the creator(s) wishes them to see. Elizabeth Cowie (2011) offers further insight into this. Her work binds the process of making non-fiction film together with the expectations and apprehensions of representing actuality within them and she states:

Documentary films as recorded actuality therefore figure in both the discourse of science, as a means of obtaining the knowable in the world and in the discourse of desire – that is, the wish to know the truth of the world, represented by the question invariably posed to actuality film, is it reality so, is it true? (2011, p.25)

What she is referring to is the potential bias subjectivity of film. As I state in my film it was never my intention to produce an autobiographical piece. Instead, my goal was always to produce a documentary that reflected my own personal quest towards becoming more politicized, whilst reflecting the implications of a far greater subject. As I pieced the documentary together, it seemed necessary to me to reflect the inner motivations that initially drove me to create it. The outcome was that the documentary took the form of a first person narrative. As Alisa Lebow describes in her work *The cinema of me: the self and subjectivity in first person documentary*:

...They may not be about a person, self or other, or other at all, but about a neighbourhood, a community, a phenomenon or event. The designation “first person film” is foremost about a mode of address: these films speak from the articulated point of view of the filmmaker who readily acknowledges her subjective position. (2012, p.1)

Lebow states here that the filmmaker then becomes the primary influence in guiding the storyline. Consequently, the first person format does not necessarily focus on the filmmaker but rather on the wider issue these films often address, and the filmmaker’s perceptions and experiences with it.

Stella Bruzzi (2006, p.5) also touched on the matter of reality in relation to documentary. She pointed out that to engage in the making of a documentary practice is to be in constant dialogue with reality, highlighting the filmmaker’s responsibility to articulate their experiences of the event with its politics of representation. Subjectivity informs our understanding of reality and the transnational element was a part of my subjective viewpoint. As a filmmaker, I found myself in constant negotiation between the myriad of ways in which I could best represent the events I witnessed in the streets of Brazil, through the eyes of a transnational filmmaker. This negotiation can be seen in segments such as my personal history and my relations with family and friends. The combination of editing techniques, voiceover and archive footage I used allowed me to create a window onto my own personal reality and to examine how the nature of that reality was shaped by surroundings and personal opinions, consequently shaping my own political views.

1.10 Examples of first person narratives within documentary

The second half of the 20th century saw a surge in the interest of self-representation through practices such as photography, painting, literature and dance. The exploration of the self and the question of “who are we?” was central to those who felt the direct effects of dictatorships, world wars and colonial rules. Autobiographical film work created space for the reflection and depiction of the increased fragmentation of human experience, becoming a tool that assisted authors in representing, processing and coping with deeply personal journeys and truths. Autobiographical and diaristic

films assisted in dismantling the idea of the romantic self. Authors saw in the medium, an opportunity for a style of self-representation not yet present within the mainstream media.

As Renov (2008) summarised, those who could not relate to the forms of representation present within entertainment industries, news and advertising, found a vital expression of agency in autobiographical work. Israeli filmmaker David Perlov for example, started his renowned film *Diary* (1973-1983) by saying: “*I want to film by myself and for myself, professional cinema does no longer attract me*”. Perlov’s work embodied a first person viewpoint. Throughout the six chapters of the film, the author’s subjective voice serves as a guiding entity to his personal journey, documenting everyday life and family moments under the backdrop of socio-political changes in Israeli society. The ten years of his life are not revealed to the audience from a confessional perspective, but rather, through personal observations of the exterior world and his personal inner world, reflecting upon the ephemerality and impermanence of life and its circumstances.

Perlov’s *Diary* is as much of a biographical trajectory of the filmmaker, as it is a journey through his exploration of audiovisual methodology. His work inspired me in my personal desire to depict aspects of my biography while at the same time exploring the wealth of diverse visual and narrative possibilities the first person method has to offer. Much like Perlov’s opening film quote, I too felt disconnected to current practices and trends in documentary filmmaking and cinema. As an independent filmmaker, I did not have the resources or the funds to shoot a film with high-end camera equipment or a camera crew. I was also filming during a very troubled political time in Brazil, where my personal safety as a female filmmaker was a concern. As a result, I questioned my technical filmmaking abilities and capacity to take on this project on my own. It immediately became apparent to me that I would have to be resourceful, innovative and creative in order to capture my shots and construct my narrative.

What the first person method offered me was a platform to explore and experiment with home-made video techniques and creatively utilise them to tell my story. *Diary*

reminded me of the beauty, truth and honesty that can be found and captured in not only the everyday, but also in personal objects (much like the ones I used to create some of my documentary's cutaways) and in the home environment. The truth is, I did not need expensive-looking cinematic cutaways or a camera crew. While the amateur-esque aesthetic of my film concerned me, the intimate character of my filming set up worked in my favour by allowing me to feel comfortable and free to discuss, engage and reflect upon aspects of my experiences and personal life. This was something I would not have otherwise done so should anyone else have been in my house, or in the room with me: *"Right now, I'm sitting here with no cameraman in the room. I'm totally alone. I would never, ever talk this way if somebody was here"* said filmmaker Lynn Hershman about her experience in creating a first person narrative that revolved around her intimate struggles with body acceptance and weight control.

The first person method enabled me to use resources that were within my reach and the confines of my personal space. Through the process of reliving memories and experiences with friends and family members, and through my courage in questioning and putting forward the privacy of my life, I was able to explore a wider issue in the public sphere. As Renov puts it, *"to understand social by way of personal"* (2008, p.63).

First person films have become a powerful tool to document history as it unfolds with the purpose of instigating change by informing and impacting present generations. In her 2017 documentary, *"The War Show"*, radio host Obaidah Zytoon gives a personal, first-hand account of mass protests and repression in Syria. Large-scale protests against the Syrian government and president Bashar al-Assad erupted in the country in 2011. Zytoon and her friends took to the streets with cameras in hand, capturing the protesters' emotions, viewpoints on the situation and hopes for a new era of freedom within the country. Despite the protests, Assad's regime remained in power, the military repression towards the protesters was brutal, and the country inevitably plunged into a civil war.

Told from Zytoon's perspective, the film is a highly personal, yet universal account, of the euphoria of protests and hope for socio-political change and the despair in the face

of a full-scale civil war. The Syrian war is referred to as “the first YouTube conflict” (Rosen, 2018, para 17). The title “*The War Show*” highlights the role of the camera as being a powerful weapon not only to witness and capture events but also being able to instigate them. In a sequence of the film, we see young men approaching the camera and pulling up their sleeves to show the injuries caused by the regime’s extreme oppression. Zytoon says: “*The camera was an event in itself and seemed like salvation for the people. But it was also a source of danger, we couldn’t be in one place for too long.*”

I too felt and experienced this during my process of filming the Brazilian protests. The protesters seemed to want to be seen and fully heard. They were often drawn to my camera and would then engage with it by showing off their placards or vocalising their emotions through personal accounts of their experiences. The State was quick to reprimand independent filmmakers, videographers, vloggers and independent media producers, as they were seen to be exposing a narrative contrary to the one which they desired. Having a camera in my hands meant that I too was deemed a threat and put me at potential risk from the extreme forms of police repression. I bring this example forward as I too sought to represent in my film, the importance of the camera throughout the 2013 protests. I felt it necessary to utilise vlogging filming and editing techniques to connect with the people and depict this historical moment in Brazil, while also illustrating the significance of the video apparatus and online media for the present Brazilian generation.

1.11 Trusting my intuitive voice

Throughout its history, much has been discussed about documentary filmmaking in terms of authenticity, objectivity and veracity. Given documentary’s tendencies towards hybridity and subjective representation of the self and subject matter, the process of making a film is in itself one that instigates debate and critical evaluation of the reasons behind the filmmaker’s creative choices. The filmmaker is therefore faced with a multitude of choices that will influence their direction and storytelling construction. Many choices are subject to debate and evaluation, from technology to

aesthetics, narrative techniques, cultural capital and interaction with cultural and socially constructed meanings.

When I started filming this documentary, I was yet to have an intention for a definitive outcome. I had not envisaged how the wave of protests would completely engulf the country and how I would then participate and engage with what was happening around me. The explosive, unplanned characteristics of the political movements left no room for pre-production or planning. The filming of the demonstrations was a surreal, spontaneous mix of curiosity and sheer disbelief. Witnessing protests on such a large scale filled me with feelings of excitement and intimidation. Although chaotic, the entire experience connected people through an underlying feeling of frustrated ambition and desire for change. Upon returning to the UK and analysing the footage I had, I was able to structure and define a direction for a narrative and further explore the feasible shapes this research could potentially take. As Brad Haseman has said:

Practice-led researchers construct experiential starting points from which practice follows. They tend to 'dive in', to commence practicing to see what emerges. They acknowledge that what emerges is individualistic and idiosyncratic. This is not to say that these researchers work without larger agendas or emancipatory aspirations, but they eschew the constraints of narrow problem-setting and rigid methodological requirements at the outset of a project. (2006, p.100)

Two additional components I often rely on as a filmmaker are intuition and instinct. My reliance on these was considerable when making this documentary. A useful definition of intuition is given by Betsch (2008):

...intuition is a process of thinking. The input to this process is mostly provided by knowledge stored in long-term memory that has been primarily acquired via associative learning. The input is processed automatically and without conscious awareness. The output of the process is a feeling that can serve as a basis for judgments and decisions. (2008, p.4)

According to Bestch, intuition results in a feeling, and feelings tend to influence and inform our conscious thought processes and decision-making abilities. The process of

filming the demonstrations and of self-inscribing within my documentary, required not only my practical experience and expertise but also my intuitive voice. This, in turn, raised questions such as; how did I feel about placing my self on camera? How did I feel interviewing and constructing a representation of my family members and friends? What feelings did I experience during the June 2013 protests? Answering these while consciously reflecting, engaging and recording my experiences with the world allowed me to deepen my awareness of my self. This process significantly integrated my identities as a researcher, a filmmaker and the subject of the film.

Learning to listen fully to my intuition and the feelings and sensations it raised within me throughout the making of my film, enabled me to make more mindful decisions. It also assisted me in accepting my doubts and insecurities and to remain open and curious about new storytelling possibilities.

For example, the unpredictable nature and chaotic environment of the protests meant it was difficult for me to rely on planning or storyboarding techniques. Instead, the process often involved spur of the moment judgement, where I would rely on instinct, make split-second decisions and use intuition to guide me through necessary actions. There were periods of heavy violence involving clashes between the police and protestors, which as a woman instilled in me a deep sense of caution in my approach. Similar to the flight or fight response, these attributes were what guided me through these situations.

The element of intuition is definitely an important factor that should be taken into account as a documentary filmmaker. Within creative modes of address, Klee states that intuition can play a key role in research outcomes:

We construct and keep on constructing, yet intuition is still a good thing. You can do a good deal without it, but not everything. Where intuition is combined with exact research, it speeds up the progress of research. Exactitude winged by intuition is at times best.
(Klee, 2012, p.159)

I recognise how intuition has come to inform my process of analysis and to influence my own creative research. Without intuition, I wouldn't have been able to capture specific moments within the documentary and subsequently construct its final narrative. Taking into consideration and acknowledging the presence of my intuition in my work resulted in the extensive process of construction and deconstruction. I produced multiple edits, building narratives only to push them down again, dissecting content and remaking storylines over and over: this was not something any filmmaker would be likely to plan to do. Instead, these choices were heavily guided by my intuition. In my experience it is a part of an intrinsic, complex emotional journey undertaken by the researcher, particularly when the element of the personal weighs heavily within the research process and practical work. The element of the unforeseen and the unexpected allowed the documentation of 'real events' to be unpredictably exciting and interesting. Applying creative intuition in these instances helped play a part in finding guidance through the unpredictable nature of the practice.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I believe that the methodologies used in the making of this practice-led project were fundamental in my construction of a self-conscious narrative that sought to give social context to an individual experience. I have offered an insight into the deeply personal challenges involved in the process of self-inscribing and constructing a first person driven film. Inspired by Alisa Lebow, I regard the first person filmmaking genre as a practice that reflects and further contributes to the complex act of deconstructing and constructing the self. The production of this film revealed my difficulties in finding my personal voice as the 'I'; as the narrator of the documentary. It also exposed my conflicted identity as a transnational filmmaker. I had to go through a significant process of self-reflection in order to construct the film's narrative.

This required me to take into consideration my self-identity and all that had come to play an active role in shaping it. These factors directly influenced the aesthetics and tone of the piece. The main decision to put together a narrative in the style of a first person documentary was to make use of storytelling techniques that allowed me to honour my personal journey.

My subjectivity leads the practice from the early stages. I stayed true to the highly personal character of my research and took advantage of the heuristic element present in the making of this entire PhD project as a way to explore the processes and outcomes of constructing a first-person narrative. When the colours of emotion that result from inserting yourself as both the maker of and subject in the piece are taken into account, the research is enriched. The very subjectivity of first person documentaries makes an implicit social comment on the increasingly blurred boundaries between public and private spheres and on the exploration of identity as “an active, self-directed process” (Aufderheide, 1997, p.7).

Regardless of their motivations in making a first person film, all first-person filmmakers strive to make public an experience they deem unrepresented or made invisible by way of the mainstream. They find in the first person mode, a cathartic and conscious way of exploring their own personal voices, while at the same time expanding the on-screen representation of often underrepresented or discriminated issues and struggles present within larger social contexts. As it pertains to my film, the impulse that drove me to open up my private life lay in my desire to explore my transnational identity and reconnect with my native home through understanding my experiences within the 2013 mass protests. Behind first person films, there is a desire to discover and assert our own place in the world and chronicle the discovery of such places. First person narratives enable a dialogue about the encounter of the self through the eyes of the other. The relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘You’ of the film, in my case my relationship with my friends and family members, reminded me of who I once was and informed me of who I had now become. The use of personal and historical archival footage enabled me to illustrate this, providing me with the opportunity to trace parallels and highlight similarities and differences between the past and present.

The first person mode provided me with an opportunity to capture my immigration experience. I was able to document my feelings of physical and emotional displacement and analyse the bewildering clash between two cultures and languages through experimenting with audiovisual tropes. Translating this experience to both the

film and the exegesis was challenging as it is not a straight-forward process to understand, elaborate and quantify the emotions and feelings that arose as a result of doing this project.

The propensity to subjectivity present in this style of film still encounters challenges within the scholarly community. The concept of 'the personal' in academia is one that still remains in its infancy, searching continuously for solid embedded foundations. In creative practice 'the personal' could be in one way defined as a wealth of emotional and internal processes that interconnect and arise upon the undertaking of any type of research. By taking practitioners' experiences and processes into account, 'the personal' creates a bridge that connects these to the production methods and final outcome of the practical work, ultimately creating new pathways for knowledge, interpretation and measurable research findings.

Although there has been an increase in the number of first person documentaries produced over the last decade, the first person mode still lives in the interstices and margins of mainstream cinema. This positioning is what gives the method the leeway to experiment and rebel against more mainstream media norms. Between the streams of communication that dominate today's postmodern society, first-person documentary will always enable any individual (regardless of age, gender, race or nationality) to represent their own unique, personal experience and relationship with the world. This is why more attention needs to be brought to the practice through discussions, writing and film screenings. As we move into the future towards an ever more digital and mediated world, we have to acknowledge just how important a method this currently is and will continue to be.

Chapter 2

The Cycles of Mass Protests in Brazil

Introduction

This chapter provides an insight into Brazil's history of large-scale social movements. My intent was to explore and understand the key factors that have contributed to shaping the June 2013 protests. I consider two mass mobilisations, the 1984 Diretas Ja and the 1992 Caras Pintadas, as the historical backdrop for the 2013 movements. I reflect upon the circumstances that led to the emergence of each one of these protests by analysing the mechanisms that shaped their structure and I map out their ideological alignments and organisational expressions. I explore the correlations and differences between the three large scale social movements, analysing the cyclical quality of these protests and contextualising them in relation to the concept of 'cycles of movements' discussed by Sydney Tarrow (1998).

In order to attempt to explain the 2013 phenomenon, its intricacies and the 20 year gap between it and the 1992 Caras Pintadas, it is necessary to delve into the impact that previous mass movements have had on Brazilian society. This allows for a more informed perspective onto the progress and challenges found within Brazil's democratic space over the years. As Hochstetler put it: "The stories told of Brazilian

social movements have been intimately linked to the rise and fall of hopes about the quality of Brazilian democracy” (1997, p.1). There is a limited body of work analysing the three cycles of mass protests in Brazil. Since the 2013 protests ended, many academic articles that attempted to investigate the mobilisation and demobilisation of the demonstrations were published. However, few publications discussed the June 2013 movements in relation to those of 1984 and 1992. Luciana Tatagiba (2014) provided an interesting reflection on these cycles through a deep analysis of their anatomy, exploring their symbolic construction, infrastructure and confrontational performances. I draw and build on her work by highlighting fundamental generational differences and practices of organisation within these protests.

Sydney Tarrow (1998) put forward the notion of ‘cycles of protests’. He defined them as a phase in which mobilisations reach their peak, where public movements escalate and experience a change in pace and frequency: a space in which a large number of participants, from various backgrounds, conglomerate in their own way, following their own agenda within collective demonstrations. These mass protests have the ability to propagate and mobilise different pockets and groups within society, allowing for new forms of organisational practices and new ways of protesting. A fundamental characteristic of these cycles is precisely this ability to expand from their main agents of mobilisation to other groups less likely to mobilise, as well as their antagonists.

Tarrow suggests that in order to understand the dynamics of these cycles, it is necessary to observe the way in which social movements relate to their organisational and structural processes, how they have come to act and interact (1998, pp.14-15). He argues that within these cycles, there is a correlation between protests and political reforms. Tarrow observes that the principles which social movements are built upon often vary between their main agents and according to the amplitude of the conflict. This comes across from the way they grow and develop themselves to the strategies deployed within their organisation.

By understanding these demonstrations as a cycle, he went on to consider the diverse methods through which social movements have come to interact with political institutions. Tarrow's idea was that there is an ongoing correlation between the way mass protests develop and the structures of power and ideology of its institutions. This allows for different themes to emerge and for the participation of different actors who seek validation within these movements and as a result it impact the way in which these mobilisations come to form. Tarrow goes onto say that "A cycle of protests is fundamentally a political process" (1998, p.435).

The dynamic of these cycles is influenced by the way social movements come to interact with the state. Hochstetler corroborated this theory, by stating in her work 'Democratizing pressures from below? Social movements in new Brazilian democracy' (1997) that the collective mobilisations witnessed in Brazil in the 1980s and thereafter adequately fitted the concept of cycle. Hochstetler claimed that echoes of the cycle of social movements in 1984 still lingered; whilst the cycle reached the end of its first version, it did not come to an end per se (1997, p.15). Patricia Hipsher adds to this by putting forward the argument that "In Latin America, cycles of democratisation have generated cycles of protests" (1998, p.154). I make use of the definitions of these authors as a way to place all three large-scale movements, 1984, 1992 and 2013, in the category of cycles. Whilst I agree with Hipsher that Brazil's 1984 transition from authoritarianism to democracy saw many collective demonstrations, I would add that the 1992 and 2013 waves of protest were, in their own way, a generalised demand for an improvement in the quality of the democratic pillars instated in the country.

I begin the next section with a historical account of the political context in which these cycles of mobilization and protest are set. I go on to offer an autoethnographical insight onto the 2013 campaigns. I reflect upon my experiences during the making of this practice project as a way to shine light onto the complex factors that have contributed to the surge in protests in the streets of Brazil in June 2013. I do so by observing the generational differences and similarities that lie within the structure and cartography of the three mass demonstrations.

2.1 Historical context: the dictatorship years

I bring forward a historical context as a way to make sense of both the emergence of the June 2013 protests, and the twenty year absence of large-scale movements prior to them. To understand the recent mass demonstrations, it is necessary to look back in history and locate these protests within the two earlier waves of mobilization. Gaining deeper insight into the political scenario present during 1964 to 1984, helps to further establish factors that led to the emergence of the first wave of mass protests in 1984 and consequently, the mass protests that followed suit.

The dictatorship period in Brazil was stated in 1964, and was marked by a dominant military presence who, for twenty one years, conducted the country's government. It was a time in which Brazilian history was characterised by the practice of several institutional legal Acts, which allowed the implementation of censorship, political persecution and oppression of constitutional rights. This stifled democracy and repressed those who were against the military regime.

At the end of the 1970s, Brazil experienced the economic crisis that affected Latin America as a whole. Ernesto Geisel (1974–1979), the then president, was a moderate member of the military and found himself having to assume the presidency during a time of economic decline. High foreign debt, triple figured inflation, issues with the educational system, misery and infant mortality ravaged the country. These were the fundamental reasons that led to significant public dissatisfaction with the reigning military government.

The support for the military decreased as Brazilians sought a rapid end to the military dictatorship. Unlike Chile and Argentina, Brazil had not closed the doors of its Congress. This allowed for moderate and soft line militaries to assist with the slow transition into a democratic regime. Geisel's mandate laid the foundations to progress the liberation of the government. Viola and Mainwaring state that the shift to a democracy in Brazil was a "limited and unfinished transition initiated from above" (1984, p.1) meaning that, unlike other South American countries such as Argentina and

Chile, no major revolution or civil war occurred for democracy to be instated. It is possible to say that no force was used in the removal of the military and its institutions; there was rather a slow process of negotiation with the authoritarian elites that were in charge of many aspects of the transition.

2.2 The Diretas Ja

In 1984, millions of people took to the streets across several cities in Brazil to fight for their rights and demand the direct vote. Different social and political groups joined forces in various collective demonstrations known as the Diretas Ja movement. After two decades of a strict regime that caused Brazilian citizens to feel intimidated by the oppressive government, the Diretas Ja movement mobilized the public, used strength in numbers and found the courage to fight for and regain civil rights. It is possible to say that the Diretas Ja can be defined as leading the cycle of large social movements in Brazil, from campaigns to protests. According to David Snow, social movements are thought of as:

Collectivities acting with some degree of organisation and continuity outside of institutional or organisational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organisation, society, culture, or world order of which they are a part. (2004, p.11)

Additionally, Tilly (2004, p.80) observes that a social movement has as one of its fundamental aims the securing of more rights for a particular group and it is possible to conceive of the Diretas Ja movement in these terms. The demonstrations and parades included different sectors of the population: from the National Union of Students (Uniao Nacional dos Estudantes - UNE), to the Unified Workers Central (Central Unica dos Trabalhadores - CUT), religious leaders, intellectuals and artists (Sadler, 1986). Future presidents Luis Inacio 'Lula' da Silva and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, alongside public figures such as the musicians Chico Buarque and Gilberto Gil and the football player Socrates, all participated in the movement for direct elections. Each of these groups had a different agenda at its core, thus contributing to the heterogeneous character of the mobilisation. The movement went from rallying for

changes within employment and urban conditions, to fighting for political amnesty. Kotscho (1984, p.28) stated that, according to his own recollection the movements validated concerns about the unwanted presence of the United States in Latin America and the highly criticised agreement with the International Monetary Fund in Brazil (FMI).

The variety and the coming together of diverse niches of society in the 1984 public demonstrations gave them the character of a 'cycle of protests' (Tarrow, 1998). Hochstetler observed that the *Diretas Ja* was framed by the master context of democratisation and the fight against the military rule (1997, p.4). This created a scenario in which different strands of social movements and political opposition parties would come to find a sense of unity, seeing in the 1984 mobilisations a space in which to raise the flag for their causes and ultimately to come together with the end goal of overthrowing a military regime.

Bertoncello (2009, p.184) argued that political opposition parties were key agents (at least, initially) within the protests of 1984, as they provided the financial resources to fund and coordinate pro-*Diretas* campaigns. He stated that these pro-demonstration supporting committees were able to multiply at a national level. They were able in this way to bring other social movements, institutions and actors together, appropriating the organisational apparatus through which these movements were formed, creating what Tarrow (1998) described as structures of mobilisation.

The protests were initiated slowly in 1983, with the first demo arranged in the city of Abreu E Lima in Pernambuco, north-east Brazil. It was a demonstration organised by members of the opposition parties, labour unions and social movement organisations. Gradually these public actions began to spread to other cities in Brazil. Luciana Tatagiba (2014) and Bertoncello (2009) point out that the movements for direct elections made use of cultural repertoires, symbols and rituals in order to appeal to potential participants. They describe this as a process of attaching meaning to these symbolic tools, as a way to validate the demonstrations. Snow and Benford go on to

explain this in terms of “collective action frames” defined as “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)” (2000, p.614).

Indeed, the Diretas Ja was known for its appropriation and reinterpretation of Brazilian nationalist symbols such as its use of the national flag’s colours, green and yellow, as the official colours of the protests. The national anthem was sung by politicians and citizens during the rallies and the slogan “I want to vote for president” was chanted by the people. Kotscho (1984, p.89) described his experiences of the mobilisations as civic parties and carnival celebrations of the idea of nation and nationality.

Bertoncello (2009, p.190) expands on the duality of meanings present in the movement, from the presence of singers, football players and so-called ‘national heroes’, to people dressing up in clothes that symbolized their support for the movement, representing the idea of national pride and nationalism. Part of this was a ridiculing of the political scenario and political figures: dolls and puppets were created for re-enactments of burials and funerals to signify the death of the military rule. All of the acts of nationalism within these movements sought to represent a repossession of the country, where Brazilian citizens claimed their Brazil back.

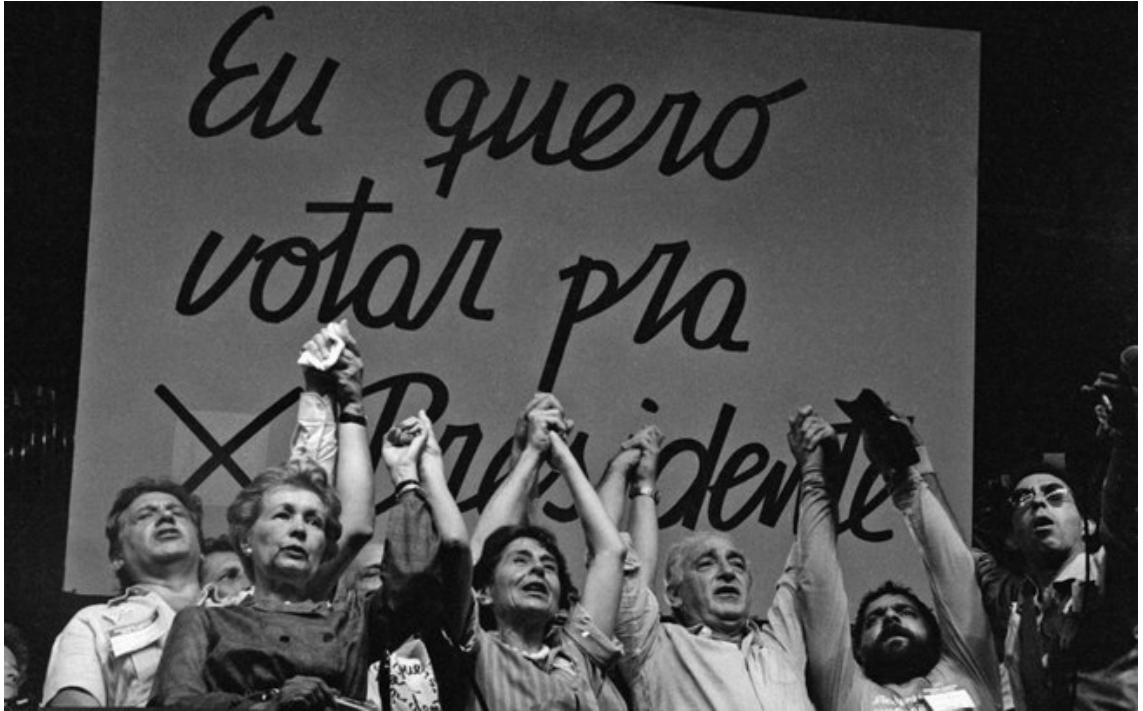


FIGURE 1

From left to right: Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Mora Guimarães (Wife of Ulysses Guimarães), Lucy Montoro, Franco Montoro and Lula at the Diretas Ja campaign in Sao Paulo. The slogan reads: "I want to vote for the president".

Source: Último Segundo - iG @ <http://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/politica/2014-01-24/maior-movimento-popular-da-historia-do-brasil-diretas-ja-completa-30-anos.html>

In contrast to the 2013 protests, the Diretas Ja movement took place at a time before social media and the internet. The magnitude of the 1984 protests was unanticipated but crucial for its importance as a large-scale social movement. As Tarrow argues, during a wave of large-scale protests, social movements take advantage of the mobilisation and use the protest arena as a space to amplify, transform and create room for other insurgent movements to emerge. (1998, p.192). The pro-Diretas committee, formed by political opposition parties and associates, built on the existing organisational format and as a result was able to expand the demonstrations to a national level.

It was on the 16th April 1984 that the largest demonstration of the Diretas Ja campaign happened, involving 1.5 million people at the Vale do Anhangabau in Sao Paulo. The dissolution of the Institutional Act Nº5 during the Ernesto Geisel mandate meant that media outlets, newspapers and television were now able to discuss and contribute to

the construction of these protests. Rede Globo, the largest media broadcasting corporation in Brazil, and a supporter of the military regime at the time, changed allegiance upon realizing the magnitude of the movement. It was not possible for Globo to ignore the demonstration, as it initially did so (much like during the June 2013 protests).

The television coverage of the mobilisation contributed to what Bertoncello (2009, p.185) called the 'ritualisation' of the demonstrations. It enabled those who did not attend the demonstrations in the streets to feel a sense of participation, thus creating emotional engagement. Although these mobilisations had strength in numbers and caused a national commotion that had not been seen before, the Diretas Ja amendment was not sanctioned by Congress. The protests, however, meant a lot more for Brazilian citizens and the Brazilian political scenario. As Salvador Sandoval says:

Even though the opposition coalition failed to bring about passage of the constitutional amendment, it succeeded in consolidating massive mobilization against the resistance of the regime.
(Sandoval, 1998, p.182)

The campaigns for direct elections instigated a process of questioning among engaged citizens about what the concepts of citizenship and democracy should and might mean. Through protests and pleas for their voices to be heard they were inadvertently exercising the right to freedom of expression, a right that a democratic regime would guarantee its citizens.

The outcome of the Diretas Ja movement was consolidated four years after its occurrence, when Jose Sarney assumed the presidency in 1988 and established a civilian government. One could say that at the time the protests were not successful in their goal of implementing direct governmental elections. However, the mobilisations played an important role in speeding up the process of redemocratization in Brazil by pressurising the government to act quickly and weakening the military administration. The scale of the campaigns managed to get to the source of the regime, forcing it to

give up and decentralize. What the Diretas Ja succeeded at was communicating the need to reprogram the political systems that had been instated. This instigated a change in the discourse of the status quo and allowed for the growth and implementation of participatory policies.

In 1988, a renewed Federal Constitution was established. The adoption of this detailed and extensive, document resulted in significant changes to the country's social policies. It highlighted individual rights and liberties, making the State accountable for reducing poverty and responsible for the development of a more just and egalitarian society. This new Brazilian Constitution allowed for a decentralization in policymaking and made it possible for citizens to be included in the deliberation and formulation of social policies. The implementation of the new constitution was essential in order for a democratic regime to be established in the country. Brazilians were given civic, social and political rights, including the rights: to work, to have access to education, to social mobility and security, to freedom of expression and to vote. The creation of a plethora of participatory policies enabled citizens to put their rights actively to use. Brazilians were able to engage in the decision-making and establishment of policies by participating in conferences, councils and public hearings. Their inclusion helped to maintain governmental transparency and accountability. The 1990s gave rise to policies such as participatory budgeting and participatory management councils (*conselhos*), which served to "facilitate public scrutiny of government performance... a space in which citizens negotiate priorities on public investment" (Coelho, Pozzoni and Cifuentes, 2005, p.175). Participatory budgeting was created by the Workers' Party (PT) in 1989 and in 1996, it was named by the United Nations as one of the world's best-known social policies. It became Brazil's democratic trademark and model and was replicated and implemented in over 40 different countries. The *conselhos* had been put in place prior to the 1988 Constitution but expanded considerably during the 1990s. They enabled civil society representatives to take part in discussions about political agendas and be involved in policy formulation alongside members of the state and officials.

During this period, the word *cidadania* (citizenship) came to be imbued with a broader meaning. It extended beyond a legal and political description and became used by a variety of social movements to denote social policies aimed at the excluded sectors of society. Evelina Dagnino argued that citizenship in Brazil has been redefined and reshaped several times due to the country's political and historical developments. She stated that *cidadania* was seen as a powerful social tool and that because of its influence, it became an object of dispute (Dagnino, 2006, p.2). It was given different meanings by the State, leading sectors and by Brazilian citizens themselves:

In Brazil, the notion of citizenship has been increasingly adopted since the late 1980s and 1990s by popular movements, excluded sectors, trade unions and left parties as a central element in their political strategies. Since then, it has spread as a common reference among a variety of social movements, such as those of women, blacks and ethnic minorities, homosexuals, retired and senior citizens, consumers, environmentalists, urban and rural workers and those organised in the large cities around urban issues such as housing, health, education, unemployment, violence, etc. (Dagnino, 2004, p.149)

2.3 The 1992 Caras Pintadas mobilisations

The concept of 'cidadania' as discussed by Dagnino corroborates Hochstetler's (1997) argument that the 1984 Brazilian cycle of mass movements did not necessarily come to an end but rather continued in different and vital ways throughout the 1990s.

Whilst Kathryn Hochstetler places the 1984 mobilizations in the overall context of a quest for democratisation, I find that the 1992 Caras Pintadas mass protests questioned the quality of the foundations of the democratic regime. Finding the notions of citizenship and participation somewhat contradictory and problematic, the 1992 mobilisations used the term *cidadania* to provide a key framework for their grievances. This suggested a much deeper meaning than the more usual legal or political definitions and the politics of socio-economic exclusion and inclusion were brought into the discussion. The neo-liberal character of the country's policies at the

time allowed for a questioning of the 1988 Constitution, which had gone through a broad-based formulation process and was an essential element in the implementation of Brazil's democracy. It became known as the 'citizen's constitution' (Dagnino, 2006, p.9). Brazilians, who had just emerged from a dictatorship, were able to define for themselves the basis on which they wished their country to be run. The constitution set out the principles for the new participatory and democratic institutions and these became part of the way Brazil 'did' *cidadania*. The 1988 document was, and still remains one of the longest constitutions in the world, with over 700 articles. Up until 2019, this constitution had been amended 102 times.

In 1989, Brazilians were able to vote in the general election for the first time in 21 years. Fernando Collor De Melo became the first democratically elected president of this period, and his mandate was accompanied by high hopes for a functional and fair democracy. His two-year, short-lived mandate was despised by many. Collor's poor management of the economy and the invasive character of his budgetary policies resulted in a strong backlash from the population. The economic manoeuvres he made in an attempt to control rampant inflation affected Brazilians directly, including "increasing the price of public utilities, freezing of wages and, most importantly, the blockage of financial assets liquidity (through the freezing of 80% of the private assets)" (Paccha, 2016, p.20). During his presidency, Collor claimed he aimed to modernise the Brazilian state. He wanted to open the national economy to foreign markets and encourage privatisation of a variety of dominant sectors and public services. His economic policies raised questions of inequality, individualism, consumerism and misery. Schenato (2015, p.94) argued that the role of the citizen, once defined by its inclusion in the workplace, was now being replaced by the "consumer-individual-spectator", in which citizens were defined by their ability to consume. This put emphasis on the socioeconomy disparity that reigned in the country and contributed towards the exclusion of a significant part of Brazilian society.

At this moment in time, Brazil was still at the very early stages of its transition into a democratic state. In theory, Collor was able to embody the role of someone who was

fit and ready to assist in consolidating Brazil's democratic practices and able to stabilise the country's economy. In reality, Collor found himself at the centre of a complicated series of money laundering and corruption scandals. The question of ethics was central to many of the debates around his policies and governance at the time. Whilst this was not the main factor that led to his demise, it was one of the reasons that led to unrest among young students, an important part of society who saw in the then president the hope for socioeconomic improvements, inclusion and further development of participatory policies.

The economic crisis played a key role in the mechanisms that led to Collor's consequent impeachment process. The growth in political participation enabled by the instatement of a democracy allowed new pockets of society to get involved with governmental issues: "a significant growth of urbanisation brought a new number of people to participate in politics, which contributed to create social tension and unrest" (Sallum and Casarões, 2011, p.187). The media, the same institution that once supported Collor on his candidature, was now changing its narrative by focusing on his problematic economic policies, whilst visibly taking a stand against his political practices. The media coverage, combined with Collor's inability to engage and negotiate with the ever-growing number of sectors now participating in politics, were significant factors in shaping the 1992 mobilizations. Much like the 1984 Diretas Já, oppositional parties joined forces with the common objective of impeaching him.

The foundations of the 1992 mobilisations were created by the generalised dissatisfaction and frustration with the unfulfilled promises and the questionable character of Collor's mandate. It was in August 1992, with the strong presence of young students and opposing parties, that the Caras Pintadas movement emerged. The quantity of students and student organisations present can be explained by the fact that the 1990s generation had experienced severe limitations to what they could do or say. There was a significant wish to protect and develop the rights they had acquired. As Ann Mische put it:

While today's youth were growing up under the dictatorship in the 1970s,

political narratives of participation and/or struggle were suppressed and replaced by those of technocratic expansion; then suddenly, as the military regime gradually loosened its hold, the word “citizen” began to appear from all directions. (1995, p.133)

This was key to the way Hochstetler (1997) framed the 1992 protests, in the context of a quest for *cidadania*. Much like Evelina Dagnino (2006), Ann Mische (1995) argued that the word citizenship in Latin American countries like Brazil is embedded with meanings that mutate and transform according to different “structures in civic relations” and “emerging cultural understandings” (1995, p.134). Thus, when talking about citizenship and democracy in a country like Brazil it is not possible to take a binary approach; it is necessary to take into account the nuances of these concepts. The different and somewhat fickle structures instated by the democratic regime at that stage combined with the memories and experiences of a 1990s generation of students that had grown up under the dictatorship. This generation was able to gain a deep understanding of what a lack of constitutional rights meant and set the foundations for the 1992 protests to achieve the magnitude they did.



FIGURE 2
Students during the Caras Pintadas (Painted Faces) mobilization
Source: Agencia O Globo – Cezar Loureiro – 15/09/1992

The Caras Pintadas mobilisation sought to impeach president Fernando Collor. Young students appropriated the colours of the Brazilian national flag (much like the Diretas

Ja movement) and painted their faces with it, hence the name by which the demonstrations were known. It was a peaceful movement that relied mainly on protests and rallies. Participants made use of other symbolism such as the colour black in their outfits and painted faces, in order to signify the end of Collor's mandate: a symbolic funeral for his political career.

These demonstrations, as well as the Diretas Ja mobilisations, sought to influence and pressure the legislative power into listening to their demands. On the 26th August 1992 the Federal Congress initiated the President's process of impeachment. The voting was transmitted live on televisions and projectors across Brazilian streets and 441 members voted in favour of his ousting, causing public euphoria. It was the result of the collective pressure of the masses, and an answer to their pleas. Fernando Collor was asked to step down from his role and on the 2nd December 1992 he renounced his candidature, allowing for his short mandate to come to an end.

2.4 Talking about my generation; are we alienated?

The cycles of mass protests in 1984 and 1992 contributed to the installation and implementation of democratic institutions and procedures within Brazilian society. The Caras Pintadas movement could not have taken place if it wasn't for the Diretas Ja protests. The 1992 protests learned from the foundations and limitations of the 1984 campaigns, seeking to tackle the underlying issues and achieve a better quality outcome. There was, however, a twenty year gap between the 1992 and 2013 protests. What happened during the 1990s and 2000s? What were the catalysts that shaped the June 2013 demonstrations? In order to discuss the events of 2013, I would like to make reference to the practice work created for this project. This uses the point of view of someone who was present during the events, someone who, much like the main actors of the movement, was a young, middle class student able to share the sense of frustration and dissatisfaction in the country. I seek to offer a differentiated, generational perspective on the events' structural organisation and the main agents involved, pointing out the similarities and differences between the cycles of 1984, 1992 and 2013.

The June 2013 mobilisations caught the government and the overall population by surprise. It was a time when the country seemed to be experiencing socioeconomic progress and there was not a hint of political or economic crisis in sight. Unlike the 1984 Diretas Ja and the 1992 Caras Pintadas, the 2013 protests surfaced amidst claims of socioeconomic prosperity. The previous movements were about economic development to an extent, however, they mostly revolved around the matter of democracy: the need for a voice and representation as well as political accountability. The paradox of the 2013 campaigns lay in the fact that they were protesting against a government that, unlike any before, had been able to make the promise of participation and social inclusion real.

The Workers Party (PT) had been in charge of the federal government for over a decade, since 2003. Under President Lula's eight-year mandate, followed by Dilma Rousseff's presidency, the PT successfully implemented social policies that sought to provide a solution for the increasing inequality in the country. The cash transfer program 'Bolsa Familia', together with the Universal Public Health Care system 'SUS' (Sistema Unico de Saude), assisted poorer communities and facilitated access to fundamental rights, becoming symbols for rapid social change in the country. These social development measurements were responsible for a redistribution of income, affecting social structures.

On the one hand, new social groups emerged, gaining socio-political force and access to resources. They came to be known as the new middle class or class c. On the other hand the wealthy Brazilian elites and middle classes resented their loss of privilege and power and came to show a clear dissatisfaction with both Lula and Dilma's governments. The PT's policies for citizenship expansion were able to insert a large sector of the population onto the map of consumerism. Mobile phones, home appliances, television, internet access, as well as different payment options for car purchases and flights across the country, enabled the working and lower classes to have access to similar opportunities to those of the Brazilian elites. This did not come without a price. Whilst the social policies of inclusion seemed to have assisted in lifting

millions out of poverty, they were not accompanied by adequate urban infrastructural development. Public hospitals were unable to keep up with the demand, transport systems lacked structure and airports were at full capacity.

Social development policies were also applied to higher education, with the aim of providing lower income community members with access to university. This resulted in:

... a new and larger segment of educated youth, coming from mixed social origins, and that grew up in the context of a stable economy and democratic regime. Unlike their parents' generation, they do not view Brazil through the prism of dictatorship and inflation, rather, they see the PT government as the status quo, and unable to respond to their expectations in terms of quality of public policies and services, especially related to education, urban mobility and access to consumption. (Alonso and Mische, 2015, pp.7-8)

The generalised disappointment with the PT government stemmed not only from a deep dissatisfaction with its social policies, but also with allegations of corruption, money laundering and fraud, brought to light prior to the 2013 World Cup (hosted by Brazil) and the Olympic Games. The demonstrations were once again about democracy and accountability, but this time they took place in a context where expectations had shifted.

It is against this backdrop that I wish to discuss a segment of the documentary made for this research. As a young, middle class student, raised at a time in which the PT's mandate and strategies were the norm, the limitations to their government seemed apparent. Whilst its social policies became a hallmark for development in Brazil, the party faced challenges with engaging the middle classes in dialogue. Growing up, I was often told that I should aim towards higher education and a university degree, because that would be a guarantee of a 'good' job and therefore a 'good' future. In practice, that was not the case. The job opportunities in both public and private sectors in the country were scarce, a university degree no longer meant a place in the job market and young people struggled to become financially independent from their parents. Although the situation seemed to be taking a turn for the better, it was not all progress during the twenty year gap between mass social movements in Brazil. Rampant

violence, corruption scandals and lack of infrastructure in important public sectors were very much present as issues.

So why was it that these protests had not erupted before? What were the trigger points for their ignition and what was the outcome sought by them? Through interviewing two of my closest friends, with whom I grew up and went to school, it became apparent that these were complex questions to answer and there was no simple way of addressing them. In the film both of my friends used the word 'alienation' to describe the lack of collective participation and engagement with the government. But what does being alienated mean?

The concept of alienation was first proposed by Karl Marx, who used it to explore the isolating and disenfranchising characteristics of labour within a capitalist system of production. His theory was a critique of how industrial working conditions affected the working class, leaving the workers feeling detached from their roles and alienated from their experiences. Sociologist Melvin Seeman (1959) provided a detailed overview of the concept and its many variations. He proposed an in-depth look into alienation from a sociopsychological standpoint and identified four dimensions:

- Powerlessness: This idea of social alienation relates to individuals who believe that they are unable to control the events that unfold in their lives. They believe they are not in charge of their course of living.
- Meaninglessness: When an individual cannot find meaning in their current circumstances.
- Social isolation: This pertains to an individual being unable to connect with their community through shared values, rituals and practices
- Self-estrangement: When an individual denies their own personal interests in order to satisfy others/societal expectations.

Seeman's category of social isolation best describes the alienation that I came across in my research. The fast-paced flux of socioeconomic and technological progress has

been responsible for the emergence of complex new structures, processes and institutions within modern society. Personal content production, sharing and individuality have taken centre stage in people's everyday lives in this increasingly mediated world where information is fast and prolific. These modernities have created space for a deeper, more widespread sense of social alienation. As Geyer observes:

The individual living in a world saturated with communication media is offered the possibility of thoroughly identifying with different alternative life scenarios, and at least in much of the Western world many of these scenarios can be realized if one is willing to pay the inevitable price. But a lifetime is limited, and so are the scenarios one can choose and try to realize. One of the consequences of this media-driven conscious awareness of alternative life scenarios—coupled with the freedom but also the lack of time to realize them all—is that the percentage of unrealized individual possibilities is greater than ever before, which certainly contributes to a diffuse sense of alienation: 'I'm living this life, but could have lived so many other ones.' (2001, p.392)

Working with the concept of alienation in the Brazilian context and drawing on the practice piece, I go on to explore the contribution of: i) the historical background to the current experience of alienation amongst Brazil's youth; ii) cultural aspects; iii) the quality of educational institutions.

i) Brazil's historical background

Brazil's historical background plays an important role in contributing to the alienation of my generation of middle class youth, and has led to a lack of civic involvement within mass movements. This can be traced back to the time of colonisation, where the political structures that were put into place favoured the bourgeoisie and elites, excluding a large sector of the population, the underprivileged and uneducated, from any participation in the government (Connif, 1991; Pacca, 2016). This has been rectified slowly since the introduction of a democratic regime within the country, although it is still problematic. Historically speaking, Brazil is still a relatively young, 518 year old country, one that has not yet come to terms with its fairly recent democracy.

ii) Cultural aspect

The second factor that plays a role in recent generations' alienation, and their absence from collective demonstrations for almost two decades, is cultural. In Brazil, the popular phrase "Brazilians do not like to get involved with political or public causes because citizens tend to be peaceful and calm" (Barbosa, 2014, p. 2) became common as a pretext for inactivity and conformism. Brazilian historian Voltaire Schilling (2013, para.3) observed that this discourse is problematic and, indeed, propagates the perception that citizens are uninterested and alienated. He went on to say that the recent history of social movements (of 1984 and 1992) has been able to prove otherwise.

Indeed, the large-scale demonstrations of the past showcase the Brazilian public as protagonists and catalysts for social change. However, as Mariana and Amanda both pointed out throughout their interviews in the film, we are the daughters and sons of those who took part in these movements, who grew up under the dictatorship. Amanda went on to say that we "inherit myths and behaviours from our parents and previous generations". Mariana added that whilst many of our parents and grandparents may have participated in past mobilisations, they would still have suffered the effects of growing up under a strict military regime. They would have internalized patterns of behaviour taught during that time in public and private spheres such as schools, homes, places of employment etc, whilst subconsciously learning the patterns of comportment implicit within societal rules. She claims this would inevitably influence the choices made by our parents in terms of our upbringing. Michael Cole and Yrjo Engerstrom (1993) describe this as a 'cultural-historical' cognitive approach; they claim the social context guides the way in which parents draw upon their past, in order to project a possible future for their child. Parents would teach their children a set of cultural and social behaviours previously learnt by them:

...[the mother] traces this thought process from the present into the cultural-historical past, and then into the imagined future of the child, and finally back to the present in the form of patterned interactions with the child. (1993, p.19)

Censorship, absence of freedom of expression, repression and oppression experienced during the time of the dictatorship were all key factors that influenced previous generations' behaviour. In the film, I decided to add a sequence in which I had a phone conversation with my mother. In it, I questioned her about her own involvement with politics and social movements during her teenager years. She said that the themes of politics and the state of Brazil were never raised during her upbringing in the 1970s, at the peak of military dictatorship. My mother described how in the media, on television and in newspapers, the country seemed prosperous. The military had support and control over news outlets and information for years and at home politics was not a subject for discussion.

Through interviewing my grandmother and great-aunties, I was able to gain further insight and understand how behavioural patterns were passed on to my mother's and my generation. Interviewing the matriarchs of my family was a very challenging process. Their political points of view and outlook on the protests of 2013 differed strongly from my own. Their conservative political position weighed heavily on me throughout the process of interviews. Upon analysing the material, it became evident that they too were a product of their time. They had grown up in a Brazilian society that valued patriarchal principles, the limitations of rights and the severe repression of those who wished to express their thoughts and opinions.

My great-aunties and grandmother are also avid television fans and during the military regime they were exposed to the monopoly in news and entertainment content, which was provided and controlled by the militaries. Their perception of the period of the dictatorship as a positive and prosperous time stemmed from the influence of the mass media, which portrayed and praised the military as such. Baudrillard (1985) argued that when the masses start getting distracted with anything other than their social context, a sense of passivity and conformism is instilled. The notion of Brazilians 'peaceful' and 'calm' behaviour in relation to social movements and societal grievances is a result of generational influences.

Previous generations were brought up during undemocratic, oppressive times. They had to conform, learn and normalise ideas which were, in essence, dictating and instigating passive, obedient behaviour. Even in 2019, It is still not uncommon to hear popular sayings such as: ‘mind your own business’, ‘keep to yourselves’ and ‘stay away from other people’s troubles’. This created what Mariana described in the film as a “selective blindness”, meaning that our parent’s generation and our generation had been raised to turn a blind eye to issues that did not directly involve or concern us. This resulted in an internalised response of: if it does not affect me directly, then I will not interfere. This can also be associated with the behaviour of a middle class for whom resources were available and for whom the need to complain only arose if, and when, they themselves were affected. Young, middle class students made up a significant portion of the 1992 Caras Pintadas protests, for example. The outcome of such ways of thinking contributed to the sense of alienation and civic absence from social movements and mobilisations.

iii) The quality of educational institutions

As a history teacher, Mariana was emphatic that history was an undervalued subject within Brazil’s educational system. As depicted in the film, during our school years, there was a sense that it was more pressing to learn about other countries’ historical processes than our own. At no point we were encouraged to engage in political debates or reflect upon the country’s socioeconomic situation. Indeed, it was not only that the subject of history was undervalued in schools but rather that the educational structure as a whole was disregarded. The Brazilian educational system is one that has faced many challenges in its conception. Historically it has served to benefit the elites. In public schools, the educational model lacks quality and these schools are unable to provide resources or remunerate teachers adequately. It is a system that only enables the students to perform low-level jobs and is unable to prepare them for higher education and the job market. It is also a place that “conditions the children of poor people to respect authority and accept their place in life” (Conniff and McCann, 1989, p.20).

Myself, Amanda and Mariana had the means to attend a private school. Whilst the quality of education was significantly different to that in public schools, we were also taught to respect teachers as authority figures, refer to our parents as 'sir' and 'ma'am', sing the national anthem in class, and obey Catholic values. The military model of education is, to an extent, still ingrained in Brazilian schooling. As a pillar of democratic society, the faulty educational model seen in both private and public schools contributes to the lack of collective political participation, ensuring that young students remain ignorant of important historical facts as well discouraging them from questioning authority and the status quo.

The notion of alienation is not a simple concept to tackle in relation to the lack of mass social demonstrations in Brazil's political scenario. In what follows, I draw further on my practice research and use Seeman's social isolation theory to offer an insight into the possible reasons for my generation's lack of political involvement or direct participation through social mobilisations.

2.5 The June 2013 demonstrations

I have started the film with a sequence of images of the June 2013 protests accompanied by the soundtrack of *Não é Sêrio*, a song by the Brazilian band Charlie Brown Jr. The song's narrative captures the frustrated hopes and ambitions of millennial Brazilian youth. It serves as an anthem of hope, inspiring young people to keep believing and fighting for a better society, one that benefits all. The media has depicted young Brazilians as passive, uninterested and lacking a desire for social change but this song contests that view. My intention was to provide, early on in the documentary, a sense of the magnitude of these movements in order to highlight the main actors in these protests: Brazilian youth and student bodies.

This was a cycle that had its origins in the limitations of the PT government, who seemed to not be able to communicate or cater to those who had grown up during their administration. The participatory character of their policies enabled a larger sector of the population to enter higher education institutions and gain access to the

internet and other information platforms. Through the economic measures the PT put in place, the public was now able to purchase mobile phones, cars, televisions and home appliances with ease. However, fundamental basic structures were still absent in the country. There was an increase in levels of violence, low investment in education, a precarious public health system and an urban environment in collapse.

In 2012 it was announced that Brazil would host two major world events, the World Cup in June 2014 and the Olympic Games in July 2016. For the majority of Brazilians, this felt deeply disappointing and insulting. The public questioned how a country like Brazil, which could barely provide urban infrastructure and safety to its own citizens, go on to become the host of such international events? The large sum of funds set aside for the World Cup and Olympics generated a sense of frustration and anger towards the government. As Abigail Friendly goes onto say:

The demonstrations included reminders of forgotten promises and important demands for basic social rights, signaling that Brazilians needed much more than increased consumption. (2017, p.7)

It also brought into question matters of corruption and money laundering. Corruption had become common practice in Brazil's political scenario, in the form of financial favours exchanged between politicians and members of the private sector. It affected all members of Brazilian society in different ways and raised questions about the strength of their legislative power. According to Bringel and Varella (2016, p.433), Brazilians deemed their politicians to be untrustworthy. Public dissatisfaction with their representatives would come to play a key role in the June 2013 demonstrations.

The mobilisations had as their starting point a protest called by the Free Fare Movement (Movimento Passe Livre: MPL) against a R\$0.20 (£0.04) rise in bus fares. The MPL aimed to provide just what its name denoted: free fares on public transport. It was initially aimed towards students, but eventually broadened into a universal demand. The claims centred on the question of urban mobility, an issue seen by Brazilians as a fundamental civic right that had not been fully delivered, despite the

promises made by the then government. The rise took bus fares from R\$3,00 to R\$3,20 (£0.64), a significant rise for the average minimum wage worker in the country who spent nearly one fifth of their salary on transportation. The MPL gathered thousands of citizens to protest but did not seek to take the reins of these protests, nor impose an agenda or an ideology. This opened up a space for different groups, actors and organisations to enter the arena of protest, adding diversity and expanding the claims of the demonstrations. This diffusion of collective groups is what gave the 2013 journeys the character of a protest cycle. Initially, the MPL protests were met with severe repression from the police, who in Brazil, are still a part of the military. Due to its outdated military character, a clear remnant of the dictatorship era, the police force was not prepared for handling collective demonstrations and resorted to violence, as they had been taught. Protesters, journalists and videographers were some of the victims of this police brutality and violence. Tatagiba (2014, p.59) stated that the 2013 movements also used confrontational strategies, including tactics of violence, burning buses, damaging historical sites and attempting to break into governmental sites. Additionally, the 'blac blocks' movement was introduced to Brazil, which consisted of young people dressed in black, wearing masks, occupying the streets and confronting the establishment.

Alternative media sites such as Midia Ninja, as well as social media networks including Twitter and Facebook, played an important role in offering an insider perspective on this savage oppression instigated by the government. Online platforms were able to draw attention to the demonstrations and the way in which the government was attempting to suppress them. Right wing mass media conglomerates, who up until that point seemed to be portraying the movements in terms of anarchy and disorder, saw in the protests an opportunity for discrediting the leftist government. They changed their narrative to express full support of the demonstrations:

Under the appearance of 'coverage', the TV and the main newspapers effectively called people to the streets, and – very importantly – sponsored the multiplication and de-radicalization of their demands.
(Saad-Filho, 2013, p.658)

Brazilians from different backgrounds were able to sympathise with the cause raised by the MPL and this allowed for a greater sense of indignation, repressed for too long, to rise. People saw in the recently formed mobilisations an opportunity to actively say ‘Não é só por 20 centavos’ (It’s not just about a 20 cents increase). The public then took their many grievances to the streets, shouting about the impunity and advantages given to the political class, the country’s increasing problem with violence, the state’s neglect of people’s basic needs and the abundant sum of public money spent on preparations for the World Cup and the Olympic games. Demonstrations were also catalysed by a more specific anger at political corruption and the perceived failure of democracy in Brazil.

In my experience of documenting the event, it was impossible to pinpoint a sole reason why these movements were taking place. It seemed to be a general dissatisfaction with some of the most dysfunctional pillars of Brazil’s democratic society, as well as an opportunity for minorities to find their voice and demand fundamental rights. I added a sequence to the film depicting the various placards created by the protesters during the demonstrations, which I did as a way to illustrate the numerous demands and complaints raised within the movements.

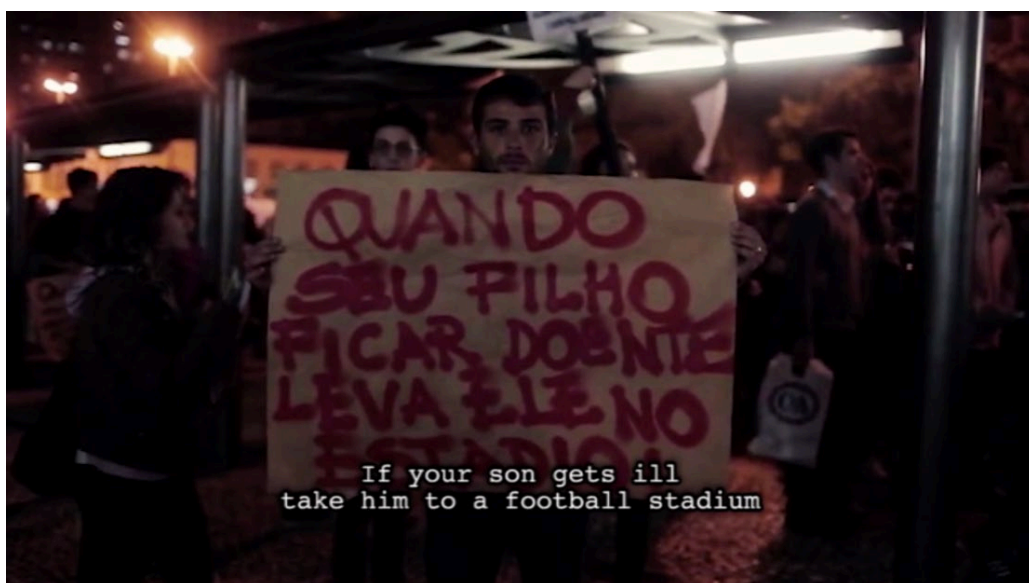


FIGURE 3
Protester, “If your son gets ill, take him to a football stadium”.

Source: *Brazil In Progress: Talking About My Generation* film.

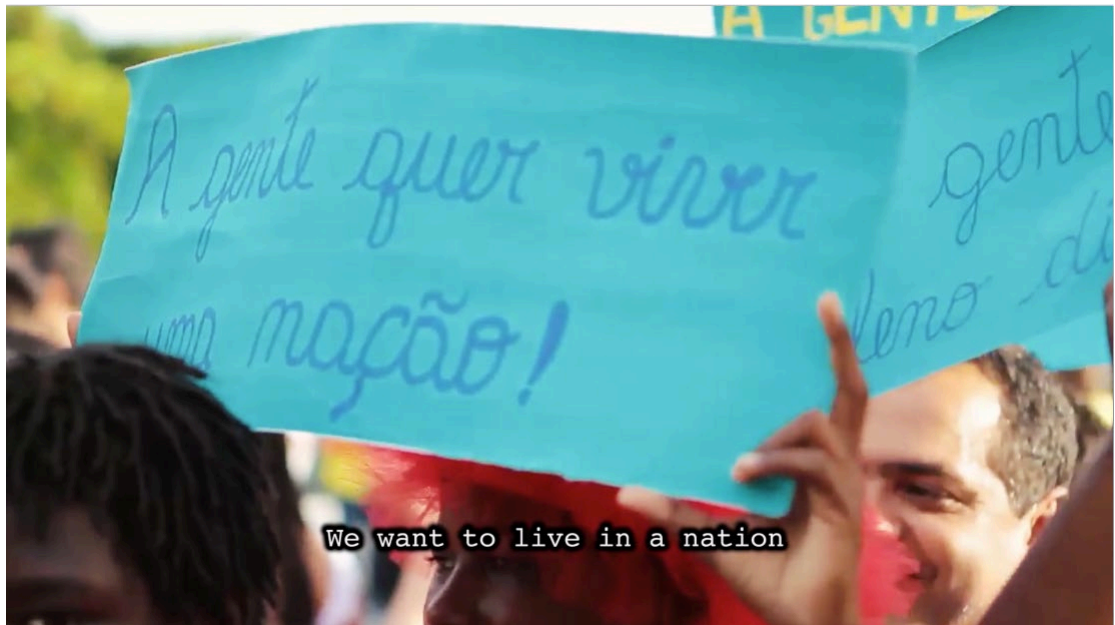


FIGURE 4

Protester, “We want to live in a nation”.

Source: *Brazil In Progress: Talking About My Generation* film.

The popular slogan ‘the giant has awakened’, seen in many of the protesters’ placards, was a controversial one. It became apparent that it was, in fact, the middle classes that had only just awakened, opening their eyes to the majority of the issues raised within the movements. However, Caldeira (2013, para7) argued that within peripheral zones these issues had been raised for many years: the giant had never really gone to sleep within these communities. The different demonstration slogans reflected the way these demands had come to morph and interact with each other as they reached the national level, occupying the same protest space. Saad-Filho argued that the individual character of the multitude of slogans present in the demonstrations was a result of a:

“Facebookitization of protest”: in which anyone could come up with a personal statement about the state of the nation and offer potential ‘followers’ their own (self-centred) remedy.

(2013, p.659)

According to DataFolha (2013) 80% of the participants in the 2013 movement had never been to a protest before. Mass protesting seemed to be a fairly new practice for Brazilians, and this became apparent throughout the organizational processes of the

demonstrations. Young students used the slogan 'Eu sou Brasileiro com muito orgulho com muito amor' (I am a Brazilian with much pride and much love) a chant normally sung during football matches. Tatagiba (2014, p.56) said that for a Brazilian youth not habituated to collective demonstrations, the act of chanting this song was a way to use the newly-discovered political drive and mark a presence within that territory.

The 2013 demonstrations did not form through social media. However, these platforms played a key role in the dissemination of the protests: I, for one, only found out about their occurrence through a Facebook post. It was no surprise that the majority of those who attended the movements were students, with access to the internet. Facebook was where the events and marches were organized, whilst Twitter offered real-time updates and news of the mobilizations and YouTube acted as a democratic space in which to share self-made content and thought processes. Within the spectrum of these demonstrations, the internet contributed to the construction of a new culture of participation.

As the protests took a violent turn, many people, including myself, decided not to partake in them anymore. As the physical protests took a violent turn, the social media platforms became a space in which to engage in debates and receive updates on the mobilizations. In the film, Mariana argued that social media platforms and access to the internet had allowed our generation and the generation that followed to be less alienated than our parents and grandparents were. She expanded on this, saying how greater access to information, international affairs and different ways of connecting made it impossible for us to remain in ignorance or oblivious to world and national issues as our parents and grandparents had been during the dictatorship era. The act of content sharing through a circle of friends and family allows citizens to learn, publicize and voice their opinions using the online sphere as a space for democracy. This has enabled participation in civic life and political affairs.

Barbero (2008) claimed that modern youth is very different from the one of the past. It is a youth that experiences new ways of being young and finds its identity constantly in flux due to the array of possibilities offered within postmodern life. He argued that the youth's ability to connect to and through new technologies allows for a new form of

‘togetherness’ and ‘gathering’. Liege Barbosa (2014), in his analysis of the mass movements of 2013, points out that French sociologist Michel Maffessoli observed how the organisational politics of these movements differed from the way in which previous movements had come to structure themselves. Maffessoli claimed that the difference between protests in a modern world and movements in a postmodern world is that previously, their organization would follow an agenda, a particular interest to be achieved: direct elections, impeachment of a president. In postmodern times, a less Cartesian model is followed. The act of partaking in collective mobilisations becomes less about the rationale and more about the emotional act of being together.

If the 2013 events felt rather unfocused in their aims, I would say it was because of the highly charged underlying tone of the demonstrations. Whilst filming the piece, what I found relatable and appealing was precisely this exacerbated frustration that was present amongst the students: the country and its political system seemed to be failing the very people that seemed to represent its future. The clear lack of representation in the congress as well as the prospect of a dire future culminated in the cacophonous sounds heard in the streets.

Unlike the 1984 Diretas Já and the 1992 Caras Pintadas movements, the 2013 demonstrations did not see the participation of opposition parties. In my time spent filming the movements, it was possible to experience a clear rejection of any sort of affiliation to, or exaltation of, political parties. This was a movement that was from the people, to the people. If the 1992 cycle was about ensuring that citizenship rights were being addressed and respected, the 2013 demonstrations built on them, becoming a continuation of that cycle. The demonstrations had at their core the awareness that the notion of *cidadania* had mutated over the years and that the demands voiced by the protesters required state policies to follow suit. As Evelina Dagnino put it:

These movements, organized around different demands, found references to citizenship not only a useful tool in their specific struggles, but also, in some cases, a powerful articulating link between them. (2005, p.149)

As Tarrow (1998) defines it, a cycle of protests fades away quickly, and it was no different with the 2013 movements. However, these protests had a significant impact within modern Brazilian history. They created space for reflection on public participation and governmental policies, whilst shattering the stereotypical image of young people and political apathy. These 2013 journeys have paved the way for other, more recent demonstrations to take place, even though we have yet to witness a movement on as large a scale as those discussed here.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to analyse the three major cycles of mass movements in Brazil. It did so by inquiring into their fundamental structural differences and similarities, enabling a parallel to be traced between them. For the purposes of this research, cycles of mass social movements are as defined by Sidney Tarrow (1998), where collective demonstrations create room in the protest arena for a wealth of different agents, actors and agendas to come together, amplifying the dimension of these movements and enabling different ways of interacting and entering dialogue with governmental institutions. The three large-scale cycles witnessed in Brazil built on one another, representing the transmutational character of the concepts of democracy and citizenship.

It is not possible to discuss Brazilian mass social movements without acknowledging that their foundation lies in an intrinsic relationship with notions of *cidadania*.

Hochstetler (1997) argued that the cycle of mobilisation of Diretas Já in 1984 never ceased to exist and continued in important ways throughout the 1990s. If in the 1980s there was a demand for a democracy to be instated, in the collective demonstrations of the 1990s and 2013, there was a clear demand for an enhancement in the quality of such democratic practices. These cycles then, do not reach an end per se, but instead become phases of cycles that find in different versions of themselves, structural and strategic differences.

There was a two-decade gap between the mass movements of the 1990s and the 2013 mobilisations. This chapter attempted to provide an explanation by referring to the practice research. Expanding on the concept of alienation as it pertained to Brazilian youth, through interviews with my family members and friends, it explored three factors for the absence of public participation in demonstrations: i) historical background ii) behavioural aspects and iii) the quality of educational institutions. The majority of the protesters in 2013, young middle-class students, were the very same people that were once alienated. The 2013 demonstrations had several trigger points for their eruption, including disenchantment with the political class, lack of urban infrastructure around the country and a deterioration in important systems such as health, education and safety. These demonstrations differed from the previous large-scale movement cycles, as they did not have as one singular outcome in mind. The plurality of grievances was a clear mark of this movement.

The June 2013 events were disseminated at a national level due to the use of social media platforms and the online sphere as a way to contribute, voice opinions and participate in the organisation of the events. Overall, it is possible to say that the 2013 movement was an unprecedented event, a phenomenon that paved the way for other demonstrations since. As with its predecessor cycles, it has not ceased to exist but has rather seen the end of its first and initial phase.

The making of a first person film allowed me to explore these cycles of mass movements in Brazil through my own personal experience within them. My documentary sought to provide an insight into these demonstrations whilst at the same time opening up a dialogue between different generations about their political perceptions.

Chapter 3

Digital Landscape and First Person Narratives

Introduction

The film of tomorrow appears to me as even more personal than an individual and autobiographical novel, like a confession, or a diary. The young filmmakers will express themselves in the first person and will relate what has happened to them. It may be the story of their first love or their most recent; of their political awakening; the story of a trip, a sickness, their military service, their marriage, their last vacation... (Francois Truffaut, 1957, cited in de Baecque and Toubiana, 1999, p.110)

In an increasingly mediated world, videoblogs have become a popular audiovisual alternative for those who wish to communicate their ideas, grievances and beliefs to a targeted, online audience. Over the years, significant developments in new media technologies, improvements in high-speed broadband and the wider accessibility of camera and editing apparatus have had a deep impact on current practices of moving image production and consumption.

During the production stages of this practice-led thesis, I was able to gain insight into the use of vlogging and the role it played in capturing and disseminating the 2013 protests across Brazil. It became apparent that videoblogging had become a plausible alternative to mainstream media. It was an effective tool for sharing and collecting information, documenting and visually communicating the core messages of the protests and expressing social injustices and the political dissatisfaction. It was possible to see that the majority of the people attending the June 2013 demonstrations had a strong online presence via social media domains such as Twitter and Facebook, as well as through the production of content for video-based platforms such as YouTube and Instagram.

This chapter aims to offer an insight into the role played by videoblogs and social media during the June 2013 protests. It seeks to explore how these online environments became arenas for citizens' engagement and participation in political affairs, whilst at the same time impacting the structure of the discourse used in

promulgating the events. I aim to reflect on the influence documentary film had on vlogging as a media practice, exploring how vloggers have come to translate non-fiction film techniques into their own work, resulting in the production of first person-driven content that is both visually appealing and narratively engaging. I expand on the use of vlogging tropes in my own film, foregrounding how and why I have chosen to make use of these techniques as tools in my own storytelling strategy. Finally, I explore the development and evolution of video and documentary practices in Latin America, focusing particularly on their use as tools for declaiming public grievances whilst raising consciousness about national socio-political issues.

3.1 Online environments and videoblogs

Videoblogging (or 'vlogging' as it is commonly known) continuously evolves, granting media consumers the opportunity and ability to become active media producers, content creators and distributors. Vlogs are often posted on host platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and even more recently, Instagram TV. These online spaces have fundamentally changed the way user-generated content is distributed, accessed and engaged with by audiences. Their exemption from controlled media censorship in most countries, together with the lack of upload fees, democratizes the digital landscape of which they form an increasing part, opening it up to a diversity of new producers of video content.

Videobloggers are not merely posting videos *of* their day-to-day routine, but rather, videos *about* their day. They strive to document the world around them and represent how they perceive it through the use of cinematic storytelling and narrative techniques. Through the use of film tropes, they are able to transform their daily routines and experiences into audiovisual narrative segments. Vloggers are often the guiding entity of their stories through voiceovers and on-camera appearances. It is through their eyes that we are taken onto a first person journey into their own lifestyle, social strata and personal interests. The camera apparatus then offers an opportunity for a 'performance of the self' (Renov, 2004; Bruzzi, 2006) where an often exaggerated part of the videoblogger's personality and life comes to the forefront, playing a key role in elucidating their personal stories and points of view. For the

purposes of this research, I will draw upon the works of videobloggers that inspired me in the making of my own film: Casey Neistat, Ben Brown and Louis Cole (FunForLouis). I will expand on their use of cinematic strategies and first person style discourse throughout this chapter.

As attending the 2013 protests became increasingly difficult due to the violent turn the demonstrations took, I found myself having to resort to online media and vlogs in order to be able to gain perspective and a broader understanding of the movements' development and how Brazilians perceived and related to them. I did not fully trust the discourse put forward by the mainstream media in relation to the demonstrations. To me, their depiction of the protesters did not remain impartial in a journalistic sense or remotely faithful to what I had witnessed in the streets. I felt their portrayal lacked veracity and depth, thus social media and online spaces became appealing alternative domains for gathering information, networking and sharing similar experiences. This was particularly the case amongst those who were actively present during the initial stages of the movements and were therefore able to offer in-depth accounts and opinions on the events.

3.2 Third Cinema: the revolutionary cinema of Latin America

The 1960s and 1970s in Latin America was a period marked by intense political turmoil and conflict, as well as significant cultural changes. The expansion of guerilla movements, the Cuban revolution and the increasing visibility of the region in world politics, were all factors that assisted in framing and shaping Latin American history. Military coups took place in countries such as Argentina (1955-1962) and Brazil (1962-1984) and instated long years of military control. Following a similar fate, Chile would later also experience the authoritarianism of a twenty year dictatorship. The military's need for power and command over ideological, political and economic affairs resulted in public scrutiny and dissatisfaction with the regime.

Latin American countries became public arenas for resistance against governmental oppression and conservative dominance. Basic civic rights and liberties were stripped from the people. Artistic expression, in the form of music, film and art, that sought to

challenge the government doctrines were reprehended and at times, banned. The 1960s became imbued with a rebellious spirit, utopian social projects and the hope for a new society. Youth countercultures began to rise against authoritarianism. The development of student, women and indigenous social movements assisted in bringing to the surface pressing social issues of that era, pushing back against the oppressive regimes.

Throughout this period, Latin American cinema experienced a significant transformation in its aesthetics and discourse. Art, in all its ambiguity, can be seen as a fundamental expression of the way our inner selves experience and connect with perceptions of our outer world. Following that line of thought, it comes as no surprise that the Latin American cinema of the 1960s and 1970s found its ground in the depiction of the living conditions of sectors of society often overlooked by the government. These films sought to reflect the reality and the political struggles of a population that felt disenfranchised and disenchanted with the status quo. This desire to document real life social issues and give image and voice to those relegated to silence propelled filmmakers towards documentary film. To Latin American filmmakers, documentary was a promising alternative to the predominant Hollywood cinema.

Documentary film's versatility in depicting real-life events and its ability to navigate between educational, factual and historical cinema aesthetics and their narratives, enabled it to become the foundation for what Argentine filmmakers Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas (1969) described as 'cinema of liberation' or 'revolutionary' cinema. It was a style of cinema dedicated to the denunciation of injustice and political neglect. Focusing on creating social awareness, the deconstruction of neo-colonialism and the exploration of matters of national identity.

'Third Cinema' originated from the aftermath of The Cuban Revolution (1959) through the influence of its most prominent figure, Che Guevara. Brazilian 'Cinema Novo' also played a key role in the development of Third Cinema. The new cinema of Brazil was a filmic movement focused on politically driven narratives that sought to denounce

issues of social inequality. This movement was pioneered by filmmaker Glauber Rocha, who in 1965 caused an uproar with his incendiary manifesto “The Aesthetics of Hunger” (A Estetica da Fome). In his thesis, Rocha (1965, p.1) challenged and questioned the European gaze and western perceptions of South American art and representation, denouncing it for its “*nostalgia for primitivism*”.

‘Third Cinema’ may evoke the idea that the movement was comprised of films solely made by filmmakers from countries classed as developing economies, such as Latin America and Africa; regions which were often exposed to colonial impulses from First World nations. These developing regions were often labelled as ‘Third World’, which often created a misunderstanding of ‘Third Cinema’ for ‘Third World Cinema’. The important distinction between these two very similar strands is that ‘Third Cinema’ ideology lies beyond geographical boundaries whereas Third World Cinema was often more native to, and for, its homeland. Filmmakers from, what was defined as the First or Second World, could come to produce a Third Cinema style of film, providing that they supported and adhered to the filmic aesthetics and ethos that defined the foundations of Third Cinema. The film, *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), for example, can be placed in the Third Cinema category. Directed by Italian filmmaker Gillo Pontecorvo, it sought to depict the struggles of the people of Algeria in overthrowing the French-colonial government. Though created by a European filmmaker, the film portrayed and addressed the social and political struggles of the Algerian people, seeking to raise awareness of the oppression instilled upon them by the French colonisation.

The term ‘Third Cinema’ was created by Getino and Solanas. Some of the most important aspects of their work are embedded in the creation of one of the most influential films in Third Cinema documentary: *La Hora de Los Hornos* (The Hour of Furnaces, 1968). Seen as one of the most important Third Cinema documentaries of the era, the film succeeds in depicting and bringing to light the socio-economic struggles and political discourses of Latin American in the 1960s. Coinciding with their revolutionary film creation, the Argentinian filmmakers also wrote the renowned 1969 essay, *Towards A Third Cinema*. In this written work, they bring forward key ideas that set the foundation for the Third Cinema movement. In its essence, Third Cinema seeks

to challenge the structures of power by dismantling neo-colonialism and questioning systems of oppression tied to gender, race or class. It harnesses the power of film to raise consciousness on issues of culture and identity, stimulating a dialogue between historical past and present as a way to understand the social processes that have led a society and its people to oppression.

Themes of neo-colonialism, oppression, culture and identity are present throughout the documentary *La Hora de Los Hornos*. The film is divided into three parts, the first part 'Neo-colonialism and Violence', addresses the European influence in Argentina. The second part 'An Act for Liberation', delves into the ten-year mandate of the country's president Juan Peron, and the challenges encountered by the Peronist movement after his fall. The final and third part, 'Violence and Liberation', is a meaningful study on violence and an anticipation for a liberated, revolutionised Latin America. The film's aesthetic form aimed to be as political as its content. Getino and Solanas brought forward the idea that revolutionary film should not fit within the parameters of first-world cinema. Otherwise it would do nothing but conform to western norms, thus confirming the power of the status quo. Utilising an arsenal of non-conventional audiovisual techniques, the filmmakers deconstructed and rebelled against the conventional style of cinema seen in the West. Through the use of techniques such as distorted music, juxtaposition, experimental compositions, collage, animation and direct cinema, the Argentinian filmmakers sought to find ways of production and distribution that differed from mainstream film industry methods.

Getino and Solanas classified and differentiated the various forms of Cinema. Describing First Cinema as the prevailing style of films produced by Hollywood. They classed Second Cinema as aesthetically-orientated European films and Third Cinema as militant films seeking to challenge the complex layers of the status quo "making films that directly and explicitly set out to fight the system" (Getino and Solanas, 1969, p.7).

In Getino and Solanas' eyes, mainstream cinema was limited to telling stories that centred upon and catered predominantly to European and American audiences (1969, p.34). This new school of Latin American filmmakers aimed to counterpoint and

challenge the dominance of Hollywood aesthetics and representation. In making use of documentary film techniques, they constructed narratives that revolved around matters of national identity and transformation. Their films could not steer away from addressing the raw, intense realities faced by their countries. This can be seen in Brazilian filmmaker Geraldo Sarno's *Viramundo* (1964), a documentary that portrayed the challenges faced by Brazilians in escaping the drought-ridden northeast and migrating to Sao Paulo (the largest city in Latin America) in search of work and a better quality of life. Equally, Uruguayan director Mario Handler's film *Carlos: Cine-Portrait of a Walker* (1965) depicted the story of a vagabond, a man abandoned by the society he belonged to. Handler stated that the Latin American filmmaker "inevitably begins to become politicised, because the existing situation prevents him from being simply a filmmaker" (cited in Chanan, 2016, p.117).

Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire claimed that these films were an important part of the process of raising the consciousness of socio-political issues within Latin American countries because they played a key role in breaking the 'culture of silence' experienced by subaltern classes. As Chanan notes:

They would break the "culture of silence" by speaking urgently and directly to the viewer's moral sense of the world as a place of inequality, injustice, and repression. They did not hide their partisanship. At the same time, they sought an active relation to their viewers, whom they wish to address as intelligent citizens with a vital stake in society. (2016, p.118)

Third Cinema films communicated to their citizens' issues and matters of concern. They were films about the people, for the people. It was a cinema that often searched for alternative methods of distribution and ways to reach its audience directly. Third Cinema philosophy inspired me throughout the making of my film. I saw myself witnessing, for the first time, large-scale social movements and political uproar in my home country, and I sought to construct a film that addressed the struggles and challenges that led up to that moment in time. However, and perhaps more importantly, in order to create my narrative, I found myself attempting to deconstruct and understand my own cultural identity and relationship with notions of nationhood. At its core, Third Cinema is the filmic expression of the filmmaker's desire to explore their idea of self and their cultural identities. It invites the filmmaker to push

boundaries and break filmic norms to escape the conventional forms of mainstream cinema. It instigates the filmmaker to experiment with audiovisual techniques and cinematic tropes.

I found this permission to be a compelling aspect of Third Cinema, as it presents opportunities to be playful and open in exploring new ways of storytelling. Its ideology inspired me to take more risk within my film, by exploring and implementing visual techniques used by other mediums, in order to create a self-conscious narrative that could speak more directly to my audience. I felt motivated to try new forms of camera movement, narrative construction and cinematography. This explorative approach assisted me in finding my filmic voice and style of self-inscription.

As we move forward in an increasingly more globalised world, the discourse of Third Cinema is re-shaped, re-invented and reverberated across a multitude of new media technologies and platforms. Gabriel Teshome stated that due to the modern world's multiplicity of identities and stories, Third Cinema has evolved to become Third Cinemas:

Third Cinema has moved, travelled, relocated, spread, it has become more than simply a Third World phenomenon. It has crossed the lines of geography, culture, class, race, gender, and religion, moving into the First World, into 'white' and other 'privileged' areas, where it has combined with other cultural forms, becoming increasing hyphenated, intermixed, composite. Third Cinemas are precisely a matter of these multiple, nomadic, diasporic forms and identities. (2009, para 12)

Third Cinema then comes to inhabit a Third Space, becoming a transnational medium, where heterogeneity of cultures and identities become a force that strengthens and re-locates the Third Cinema movement within an expanding global community.

3.3 Cinema Novo, the 'new Cinema' of Brazil

'Cinema Novo' or 'New Cinema In Brazil was' pioneered by names such as Glauber Rocha and Nelson Pereira dos Santos. Cinema Novo was a movement focused on

national and local productions, addressing themes that sought to elevate the social and political consciousness of Brazilian citizens. Rocha, a director of important Cinema Novo works such as *Earth Enranced* (1967), an allegory and satire of the Brazilian political scenario of the 1960s, discussed in his manifesto *An Esthetic of Hunger* the need for Brazilian film to put emphasis on matters of national value. He claimed that this would assist in creating awareness of marginalized groups, who had been completely alienated from wider political processes due to their own debilitating poverty.

Prominent Cinema Novo filmmakers such as Glauber Rocha, Fernando Birri, Julio Garcia Espinosa and Tomas Gutierrez Alea studied filmmaking in Europe and found inspiration in Italian neorealism and the French New Wave movement. Italian neorealism assisted in shaping Cinema Novo's style and ideology of deconstructing cultural colonization and of filmic experimentation. In *Earth Enranced*, for example, Rocha featured stylistic tropes that derived from this European influence in order to construct his story, including narrative pace, non-linear storytelling and a focus on subjective experience. Similarly, another highlight of the Brazilian New Cinema, *Barren Lives* (1963) by director Nelson Pereira dos Santos, drew upon storytelling techniques such as surrealism and minimalism in order to illuminate the harsh reality of a poor family attempting to live and survive in the drought-ridden region of the *Sertão*, in northeast Brazil.

Santos' decision to utilize a slow-paced edit technique within his narrative contributed to the depiction of the bleak, miserable lives lived by his subjects. Contrary to European movements, Cinema Novo filmmakers referred back to and engaged with Brazil's historical past. They purposely confronted the country's past as a way to understand and depict the reasons behind larger issues within Brazilian politics, socioeconomic grievances and culture. Whilst very similar to Third Cinema's core philosophy, Cinema Novo differs in that the films produced during that era were made for the purposes of theatrical release.

As it pertains to the stylistic choices made in the production of this project, I drew inspiration from aspects of the aesthetics and ideologies of both Cinema Novo and Third Cinema. My documentary aimed to illuminate the causes and consequences of the 2013 mass movements and therefore my purpose in using unconventional stylistic and narrative elements in the film was to communicate the socio-political indignation of a younger generation. At the same time, I wished to reflect the chaotic, confusing political scenario of the time. Moreover, I sought to understand and depict my own journey in understanding my own culture and transnational identity. It was then imperative for the film to question and challenge its political past as well as my own personal past, through the use of archive footage. Opening up a dialogue with an older, previous generation, as portrayed in the film by my grandmother and great-aunties.

My documentary was made in a completely independent manner. In order to convey my vision and tell my story, I took on several fundamental roles. I wrote, produced, filmed, interviewed and edited the entire film. As this was a film fundamentally told through my unique perspective and experience, it seemed necessary that the filmic tropes chosen for its narrative reflected this. I believe I was able to create a documentary that was successful in discovering new forms of visual storytelling, blending documentary techniques and videoblogs. This was a risk, but at the heart of Third Cinema and Cinema Novo lies the opportunity and the need for innovation and creativity. At its core this militant, independent and resourceful cinema requires the filmmaker to be on their toes, to break boundaries, push limits and find new roads for original forms of storytelling. Getino and Solanas used the term 'revolutionary filmmaker' to describe the subversive character of a Third Cinema filmmaker:

...the revolutionary film-maker ventures with his subversive observation, sensibility, imagination, and realisation. The great themes - the history of the country, love and unlove between combatants, the efforts of a people who are awakening – all this is reborn before the lens of the decolonised camera. The filmmaker feels for the first time. He discovers that, within the System, nothing fits, while outside of and against the System, everything fits, because everything remains to be done. (1969, p.17)

What Getino and Solanas were referring to was the impact of neo-colonization in Latin American societies by European cultures and economies of the global north. However, one could also interpret the word 'System' as referring to the cinematic paradigms which filmmakers find themselves in. The possibility of originality and creation lives in these untapped, undiscovered and experimental stylistic spaces. Documentary film, in all its vast forms, allows room for trial and error and experimentation. It is through challenging, building up and deconstructing film techniques that innovative, original and creative strands of visual storytelling can be found.

3.4 Cinema Novo and grassroots video

Grassroots video gained notoriety in Brazil during the early 1990s, when cassette tapes and VHS players became accessible items to the public. During the golden era of Cinema Novo, making a film was an expensive feat and equipment was not financially viable or readily accessible to a wider, inexperienced audience. Video offered a more factual, straightforward approach to visual communication, one that did not require the creative treatment needed for documentary films. It became a plausible alternative for militant and political groups who wished to communicate their ideologies and projects to their audience but did not necessarily have the means to do so through the making of an elaborate cinematic piece. Video was particularly popular with political organizations and activists, who made use of it as an instrument to communicate and share common experiences and aspirations. Video enabled, then, a shift in the way stories were presented and communicated.

Patricia Aufderheide (2000) claimed that video built on the experience of the politicized 'alternative cinema'. Her statement has survived the test of time as through the development of new media technologies and the increase in access to video and film equipment, we have been able to witness a significant change in the techniques used in the making and distribution of audiovisual content. The result of this has been the creation of different forms of video dialogue, expanding beyond grassroots video and extending into fictional and non-fictional storytelling tropes. Filmmaking was no longer an unattainable private club, which only artists and the privileged few had access to. Online platforms and newly accessible equipment made

it possible for visual practices to reach a greater range of layers in society. The well - known formula suggested by Bill Nichols for the classic documentary, “I speak about them to you” (Nichols, 2001, p.13) was transformed into “We speak about ourselves to each other” (Chanan, 2016, p.126).

According to this premise I place my film at the intersection of Cinema Novo and grassroots video. My documentary encompasses the aesthetic nuances and ethos behind both of these genres; they are similar in essence, being alternative audiovisual mediums that aim to provide a voice for those at the margins of society, denouncing socio-economic issues and political grievances. The first-person techniques deployed in my film aimed to mimic the format used by vloggers and video makers. I sought to replicate the sense of “we speak about ourselves to each other” (Chanan, 2016, p.126) that is so often present within vlogs addressing political issues. I did so by experimenting, utilizing a mixture of visual techniques derived from grassroots video, Cinema Novo and vlogging.

I took inspiration from the rawness and almost amateur aesthetics of grassroots video and translated that onto the sequences of cutaways that depict the streets of Brazil amidst the protests. My aim was to follow the grassroots style by imprinting onto my film the militant character of the 2013 demonstrations. Inspired by Cinema Novo and Third Cinema, I experimented with the use of film techniques utilizing archive footage, editing techniques and voiceover in order to address and investigate issues of national identity and politics. Finally, I experimented with a wealth of vlogging techniques, which I discuss further in this chapter.

Over the years, Brazilian grassroots video has been able to evolve and transform. Video producers are now able to have access to visual techniques and equipment that may have been out of reach in the past. It can be said that grassroots video has found in the affordable, accessible cinematic storytelling devices a path that brings it closer to the aesthetics of Cinema Novo. Unlike Cinema Novo films, these videos are not

exhibited in cinema screens, however, they have the potential to reach a far wider audience through mobile devices and online platforms.

3.5 Social media, video and first person narratives

As previously stated, the expansion of new media technologies in the early 2000s influenced the creation and development of new forms of audiovisual and online communication. As the internet and digital media rapidly evolved videoblogs, or 'vlogs', as they are commonly known, quickly became a popular practice particularly amongst a generation that had grown up in a world connected by Web 2.0. Vlogs drew on the foundations of previously established blogging and photography-based online platforms such as Myspace, Fotolog (which was particularly popular in Brazil in the mid-2000s) and Flickr. These online mediums enabled users to create and share personal content whilst at the same time maintaining a visual record and diary of their personal lives.

Over the years, video and photography cameras have become increasingly more mobile, compact and affordable and this has had an impact on the way information is generated, shared and experienced. Technological advancements in audiovisual equipment, combined with the expansion and popularization of social media websites has "unleashed an endless torrent of mass participation, from the trivial and the intimate to the citizen journalism of political protests and denunciation" (Chanan, 2016, p.11).

As a free-of-charge video hosting platform, YouTube established itself as one of the most popular websites amongst videobloggers and content creators. As of May 2019, 500 hours of video per minute was being uploaded onto the video sharing website (Clement, 2019, para 1). As the audience's appetite for online video content continues to grow, the platform has consolidated itself as an open space for sharing ideas, creating content and expanding networks. Anyone can post anything, at any given time. YouTube has, then, become a democratic landscape; a public arena for participation and engagement. This has proven to be particularly true amongst activists and political organizations who embraced the platform as an alternative to

mainstream media. McHale (2014) makes a case for video, highlighting its importance as a tool for social change. Through the use of visual storytelling techniques and cinematic tropes, a video can be moving and emotionally and narratively engaging. It can go beyond language barriers, reaching and transmitting messages to wider, global audiences. Young activists took advantage of owning their own means of film production and distribution and used it as a way to strengthen their networks, find validation for shared experiences, communicate ideas and at times, mobilize. In a case study of video activism, Thomson et al. (2010) divided the ways in which political repertoires can be translated onto YouTube in three categories:

- Video as advertising:

Political campaigns have found YouTube to be a cheap and more effective way to attempt to reach interested audiences and put forward ideologies and arguments. Political candidates can now post their ads and propaganda on the platform, whilst lesser-known grassroots groups find that the platform provides an opportunity to spread messages and gain notoriety.

- Video as witnessing:

Witnessing videos then serve the purpose of turning viewers into witnesses, thereby morally implicating them in what is seen. Witnessing is traditionally a strategy of the oppressed or powerless, as they are the ones most likely to fear being forgotten by the dominant population. The production quality of these videos varies considerably as what is captured is more significant than how it is captured.

(Thomson et al., 2010, p.329)

Witnessing video was used particularly during the 2013 movements. The social media platform Twitter played a key role in rapidly disseminating and showcasing live footage and short videos from the early stages of the demonstrations. It was through what Michael Chanan coined as 'small media', a term he used to describe the videos that "flourish in the margins and the interstices of the public sphere" (2011, p.2), that the 2013 protests were able to reach the national level. During the June 2013 campaigns Midia Ninja, a decentralized and independent Brazilian media outlet, would go live on

their Twitter feed reporting the development of the protests in real time. These videos would often focus on the reasons behind the movements, displaying interviews with protesters and local witnesses. They were also responsible for illustrating the aggressive police repression of the protesters, independent journalists and activists. An online audience was able to discover and experience the protests first hand. Witnessing video instigates a call for action. It was through exposing these events via visual media in a way that would appeal to the civic duties and empathy of Brazilian citizens that the 2013 mobilizations gained strength.

The Middle East upheavals in 2010 also saw in social media and video an opportunity to respond to government oppression and to communicate social grievances to the world. These anti-government uprisings began in Tunisia and sought to fight oppressive regimes, unemployment and poor living conditions. Video was used extensively during these demonstrations as a way to depict and express collective dissatisfaction. Their content was not focused on individual experiences but rather on the communal experiences of Arab citizens. Their amateur, non-professional aesthetics made them vernacular videos in their essence:

They are the first attempt by a critical mass of non-professional filmmakers to extend an informal, homemade, and largely improvised practice out beyond the realms of private or domestic life, and to use it to give an account of the public and political realms, an account which one senses is intended not only to be competent by its own, vernacular standards, but also more pertinent, and more comprehensive, than any of the accounts attempted by the professional audio-visual cultures that preceded it. (Snowdon, 2014, p.411)

They did not fit in with the vlogging, first-person style of video, nor could they be considered documentary films due to their lack of narrative structure. Regardless of the lack of storytelling techniques, these videos succeeded in showcasing the events and the reality behind these protests. Across the globe, people were able to watch and witness the rebellions and understand their motives and beliefs. The recording apparatus was used to portray a wider, national issue whilst at the same time instigating public participation.

Video as self-expression:

Videoblogs have emerged as a popular tool for online self-expression. The creative freedom involved in the production and distribution of vlogs has made it easier for individuals to self-express, share perspectives, learn and form a public, online persona. Vlogging offers endless possibilities in the creation of personal narratives and the presentation of the self. Peter Hughes (2012) pointed out that western culture's intense fascination with the self, resulted in a shift in the way new media technologies are perceived. He claimed that increasingly these platforms step away from a primary role as informational tools, to morph into spaces for the exploration and portrayal of a "discourse of identity and the self" (2012, p.240). The self can be understood as the multiple, imagined ways someone may choose to represent, construct and describe themselves according to their personal reality (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Videoblogs have, then, become an environment whereby individuals can experiment with the portrayal of their own identity, putting forward specific elements of themselves, personal opinions and political positionalities. Vloggers create public versions of their selves. This gives vlogging practice a hybrid character, able to transit between interpersonal and mass communication.

This hybridity can also be seen in the aesthetics often chosen for videoblog formats. The vlogs created by YouTube filmmakers have their foundations in autobiographical, first person documentary work. An example of this lies in vloggers' choices to emphasise on-camera performances and voiceovers. This self-representation is a result of a dialogue with the collective it engages with, particularly the vlogging communities. Much like first person documentary narratives, the self in videoblogs is relational (Lebow, 2008). Video-hosting platforms such as YouTube enable viewers to actively engage, comment and participate in vloggers' content. As success in the platform is measured by the quantity of views a particular video has, adapting and adjusting content in accordance with the feedback provided by an audience becomes an integral practice in videobloggers' routines. The viewer then becomes an essential part in informing vloggers how their online persona or self should be constructed and performed. Sorting through their day and making use of what stands out as fairly interesting, they deploy editing techniques that allow them to subjectively reconstruct

the events they witness on a day-to-day basis. They self-inscribe and perform a version of themselves within these videos, adding a highly personal element to their material and filmic narrative. This results in a daily docuseries that revolves around their lives. It is through their eyes that we are able to gain insight into the way of life in their part of the world and the social context they are in.

In order to construct their personal narratives, vloggers reach out for a blend of cinematic tropes such as voiceovers, high quality HD cameras and drones, narrative pace and structure as well as the vlogging video trademark: the handheld, 'selfie', on-camera monologue.

It was possible to see in the June 2013 protests that a significant portion of Brazil's youths (those with access to the internet and computers) used videoblogs as a medium to articulate interests, garner support, instigate debate and encourage social mobilization. The demonstrations of 2013 were made popular due to the intense youth participation in online media and forums. The creative and sophisticated online content quickly spread across social media and it became impossible for mainstream outlets to ignore the commotion. Videobloggers succeeded in pressurising both the government for answers and the mass media for coverage of the events.

New media has increasingly been used in the discussion of political matters. The act of partaking in political acts and engaging with political affairs has become more and more popular amongst young people. Vlogging has played an important role in this, as its cinematic narrative choices and modern aesthetics seem to appeal to youths. The content of the videoblogs revolving around the 2013 demonstrations focused on recognizing and addressing a need for socio-political change: however, perhaps because of the social strata of these vloggers (mainly middle class students with access to internet and filming equipment), the reasons that led to the eruption of these large scale movements seemed to be left behind:

New social movements tend to be drawn from the ranks of better educated, creative "knowledge workers"; who frame their grievances in symbolic and

cultural terms rather than struggle over material goods or economic class interests. (Lievrouw, 2011, p. 42)

There is no doubt that the students and the middle classes felt indignation and dissatisfaction with the government's practices. However, there was a sense that at its core, these vlogs sought to portray a newly-found enthusiasm for participating and engaging with political issues regardless of what these were. Joanne Lim, in her article 'Video blogging and youth activism in Malaysia' (2013), asks the question "Are young Malaysians less concerned about issues and more attracted to the idea of participation?" (2013, p.301). I have asked this question as part of my own research and within a Brazilian context.

If we think of politics as "becoming popular culture" (Lim, 2013, p.13), with the popularization of political discourses amongst a younger generation through the use of videoblogs and online mediums, then is it possible to say that Brazilians too were more concerned with the idea of active participation than with the underlying issues surrounding the protests? This is a complex question to ask, however, and what can be said is that vlogs and video culture have certainly played a key role in offering a public landscape for political debate, particularly amongst young people. Videoblogs have provided an intense sense of belonging and direct engagement and involvement.

In Brazil, social media and video practices became important tools in the dissemination of the 2013 mass movements. These platforms became integral parts of the public's day-to-day lives and this interconnectivity created a sense of engagement and belonging a community. It opened the door for everyday citizens to voice their grievances and document their own political journeys. The expansion of online video in Brazil reflects a society that was and is undergoing fundamental changes. Whilst the reasons behind these uprisings may take a back seat for content producers, the act of creating videos that discuss socio-political affairs and are shared in a democratic manner certainly played a key role in transforming the way social movements are viewed and organized offline and online. A new generation of content producers and consumers have found in new media practices and technologies, innovative pathways

for the creative use of audiovisual techniques that enable young filmmakers to explore their own identity, topics of interest and form online communities.

3.6 A generation of YouTube filmmakers

In order to identify the cinematic tropes used by vloggers and to examine how they assist with the construction of a narrative based primarily around the self, I will discuss three of the most established names on YouTube: Casey Neistat (@CaseyNeistat), Ben Brown (@BenBrown) and Louis Cole (@FunForLouis). As much as they are commonly known as 'YouTubers', they depart from this definition by identifying themselves as filmmakers. Their works have inspired me throughout the making of my practice. Cole, Brown and Neistat are able to tell stories through the creative, innovative use of intrinsic film tropes. They have adapted these techniques to a shorter, more compact YouTube format. Through the use of high-end equipment such as drones, cinema cameras and lenses, these vloggers capture and give a creative treatment to their personal routines, 'narrativising' their day-to-day lives and transforming mundane activities into stunning, cinematic audiovisual content.

Their works have deeply influenced the construction of my first person narrative. I have made reference to the following techniques used by them: an on-camera style of self-inscription; usage of creative edit transitions; the editing pace and colour grading; the variety of camera angles whilst filming themselves (in the selfie style trademarked by vloggers); as well as the production of creative cutaways as visual storytelling devices.

Both Ben Brown and Louis Cole can be considered the pioneers of the genre within the YouTube realm. Combined, they have over 13 million worldwide subscribers to their channels. Their daily vlogs average one million views per video. Louis began his channel in May 2012, seeking to share his life journey with the audience. Viewers were welcomed into Louis's world, introduced to his nomadic tendencies and became an integral part of his experience in travelling the world. The first video uploaded on Cole's channel was named *Norway Roadtrip 2012 | part 1 | Fun For Louis* (May 13th, 2012). In the 9:38 minute video, Louis deployed a first person style of narrative. He

placed himself on camera, actively narrating and reflecting on his experiences. Cole was immediately identifiable as the maker of, and subject in this short travelling documentary. He spoke directly to camera, acknowledging that on the other side of it, there will be an interested audience. His channel subscribers commented, shared and 'liked' his videos, influencing the way Louis chose to construct his narrative. Cole sought to bring his audience along on his Norwegian voyage. Through striking visuals, the voiceover, edit pace and soundtrack, we are able to experience the hurdles and challenges faced on a low-budget, European road trip.

Cole sees his YouTube films as a 'docuseries'. His videos are showcased as episodes on a progressive timeline of his travels around the world. By watching his videos, the audience is transported into his private (yet now made public) world. Viewers become familiar with his life story and his relationships with his parents, girlfriend, and friends. It could be said that there is a symbiotic relationship between Louis, as a first person video-maker, and his channel subscribers. Cole's videoblogs became a part of his audience's weekly routines and online rituals. At the same time, the public's interaction, comments and likes informed the filmmaker of his portrayal of a performative 'self', influencing on the format of his vlogs through first person driven stylistic and narrative choices.

As Cole's channel expanded due to the large number of subscribers and views, it was possible to see a gradual shift in storytelling techniques and cinematography purposely used to depict him as his on-screen persona 'FunForLouis'. In 2016, Cole faced a backlash in relation to one of his docuseries. The seven-part piece revolved around his experiences travelling in North Korea and portrayed him as a tourist seeking to immerse himself in the country's culture. However, at no point did these videos make a comment, or even acknowledge North Korea's issues with human rights and governmental oppression. As Louis had constructed the online alias 'FunForLouis', the ethos of his channel demanded that his videos have an uplifting, fun and light-hearted quality to them. As a vlogger, Louis chose to represent a subjective reality as experienced and performed by him. As a response to the negative feedback on his videos, Louis stated, "I'm looking for the beautiful, positive things. I want to connect

with local people, learn about the culture and the country” (Cole, 2016). Cole was representing a fragmentized element of reality through his own point of view and performance. The videos showcased high quality and technically competent cinematographic segments of landscapes, action-shots of surfing experiences and time lapses, completely shying away from addressing the national struggles and the overall reality of life in North Korea.

Ben Brown, on the other hand, found in self-inscription and first-person strategies a way to ‘narrativize’ his daily activities. The aesthetics of his ‘daily vlogs’ consisted in the use of key cinematography techniques. Ben directs his short films and is on camera from beginning to end. Following the vlog aesthetics, he speaks directly to camera and makes use of fast-paced editing and upbeat music throughout his videos. Brown’s trademark is the use of effective, creative transitions throughout the edit of his vlogs. His best known transition technique starts with placing his hand in front of the camera sensor to cause a handheld, fade-out-to-black effect, signifying the end of one segment. In the next frame we see him removing his hand from the camera sensor in the opposite direction, this time fading into a new shot, denoting the dynamic continuity and flow of his day. This edit style has since been copied several times, particularly by first time vloggers.

What normally would be an uneventful day for anyone else becomes an exciting expedition at the hands of Ben Brown. We experience life in the UK (and now, in Cape Town, where he is currently based) through his eyes and through his interpretation of himself and the world around him (Rideal, 2005, p.8). By watching his documentation of his own life, we are exposed to wider issues such as violence in Cape Town, the struggles of establishing oneself in the creative industries and becoming a young entrepreneur. As Ben’s popularity has grown, he has been able to go travelling and depict the world as a filmmaker. His daily vlogs have become ever more technically competent with high-quality drone shots, time-lapses and beautifully captured shots. Through the use of cinematic tropes as aids in the storytelling of his day-to-day life, Brown has been able to influence the creation of a hybrid vlogging format, a mixture between video-diary and high-end cinematic audiovisual narratives.

3.7 Videoblogging and my practice

Finally, and of most influence on my own work is YouTuber Casey Neistat. The practice created for this project has drawn a significant amount of inspiration from Neistat's video techniques and videoblog strategies. Casey Neistat is a New York City based filmmaker. Prior to YouTube, Casey had an established career as a filmmaker. He gained international exposure in 2003 after releasing a three minute film called *iPod's Dirty Secret*, a critique on the Apple product's battery life span. In the film, you hear a phone call between Casey and a customer services employee from Apple. Neistat put in a complaint about the fact that his iPod battery had broken after just 18 months of use. The customer services assistant suggests that due to the high costs involved in shipping a new battery, Casey would be better off purchasing a new one. Against the soundtrack of the rap group N.W.A's 'Express yourself', the film shows Casey and his brother Van, placing a stencil over iPod's advertisements in the streets of NYC. The stencil reads "iPod's Irreplaceable Battery Lasts Only 18 Months". They claimed that the film was a 'public service announcement' campaign. The short film quickly went viral and attracted the attention of mass media. The Washington Post referred to the film as wonderfully renegade (Stuever, 2003). This public exposure presented Casey and his brother with the opportunity to work, produce and direct their own HBO TV show called *The Neistat Brothers*.

Written by Casey and Van Neistat the show was an autobiographical, first person account of their lives. Casey's work had its foundations in first person stories. Neistat drew inspiration from the works of the aforementioned Ben Brown and Louis Cole. He perceived YouTube as challenge to improve and expand his filmmaking practice and techniques:

I made a promise within myself, which was to never have the obligation to share with you the intimacies of the everyday in my life, this isn't a journal, but instead, could I find in my everyday life, a three-act narrative to share?
(Neistat, 2017)

Casey was, in his own way, recognizing the complexity of the internal processes involved in transforming his own life into narrative. In order to position himself as 'Casey Neistat, the filmmaker-turned-YouTuber', Neistat had to reflect upon and negotiate which aspects of his reality he would document in order to construct his on-screen, YouTube persona:

It's a construct that reveals a kind of truth. You are not free to make an autobiographical construct of any kind, you are just not, and you will make a kind of construct that will inevitably talk about who you are.
(Di Tella, 2012, p.36)

Throughout his nine to ten minute vlogs, we are introduced to a very distinctive part of Casey's world. As a videoblogger, Casey focuses the first person narrative on his professional filmmaking and entrepreneurial career. The themes of his vlogs revolve around videoshoots, camera equipment reviews and the development of his business ventures. We become familiar with Neistat friends and business partners, although Casey purposely keeps his family participation and the portrayal of his private, personal life on the vlogs to a minimum.

Casey uploaded content religiously, every day at 8:00 am. In order to depict himself as both the subject in and of his practice (Renov, 2004) Neistat made use of cinematic techniques:

I went to Belgium in 2015, and I wanted to test out one thing, what would happen if I sort of 'vlogged' about my trip, but instead of talking to camera, I used really precise cinematography? Movie-like cinematography, but it was just me going about my daily life, going in to my hotel room, coming out of my hotel room?
(Neistat, Casey Neistat's Guide to Filmmaking 2017)

The sequence described by Neistat is one that makes use of high quality, skilled film techniques. In order to visually depict the simple act of entering a hotel room, Casey creates an elaborate cinematic strategy. He makes use a variety of camera angles and shots that aim to assist his storytelling. This meant that Casey had staged every step of the way in order to turn his routine into a movie sequence. This alone can be

understood as a performance of reality and of his 'self' (Bruzzi, 2013). The images seen in any of his videoblogs are far from being a natural, organic progression of his day as Neistat intervenes and stages many sequences within his vlogs. The sequence in which Casey checks in to a hotel was a far more complicated endeavour than it appeared. It meant that many camera set-ups had been tried, tested, filmed and edited onto a sequence.

A wide-angle shot establishes his arrival at the hotel, quickly followed by a mid-length shot of his entrance into the hotel lobby. On the next frame, we are shown a close up of his hand placing the key in the door lock. We then see a front shot of Casey rolling his suitcase into his hotel room and a final cut, open-wide shot showing Casey's entire bedroom and his presence in it. It is quite a literal construction of a reality, rather than the fluid, video-diary style previously associated with videoblogging practices.



FIGURE 1-6
Casey Neistat Vlog, 01/2015.

This is what separates current, modern videobloggers from the videobloggers of three to four years ago. It is possible to see this rapid shift in the videoblog's format by looking back at Trine Bjørkmann Berry's PhD thesis *The film of tomorrow: a cultural history of videoblogging* published in 2015. Berry provided an insight into the popularization of videoblogging and its relationship with cultural practices. As a part of her thesis, she interviewed and questioned young videobloggers about the processes of creating their vlogs. At that time, Berry stated that one of the trademarks of their practice was the absence of basic filmmaking techniques such as a narrative and an establishing shot. The establishing shot serves to situate the audience as to where the action in the film is taking place:

In videoblogging, we see a move away from the establishing shot and instead the focus on "tiny details" such as close-ups of objects; coffee machines (Erin), hands (Daniel, Charlene), and faces (Ryanne, Daniel, Erin). (Berry, 2015, p.167)

The introduction of cinematic techniques within videoblogs has impacted the diary-style character that videoblogs once had, allowing for the practice to develop and become more visually elaborate and cinematic.

Casey Neistat's work as a first person videoblogger, making use of self-inscription and high-quality cinematic techniques, created room for a new form of creative filmmaking to exist within the YouTube and videoblogging community. During the making of my practice and in discovering and learning filmic techniques that would be suitable for my own self-inscription, Casey Neistat was an important influence.

I wanted to find a way to illustrate visually and highlight the participation and the importance of the usage of YouTube and social media networks within the 2013 demonstrations. My film is, then, heavily inspired by the videoblogging strategies deployed by Neistat, Ben Brown and Louis Cole. My aim was that the filmic approaches used in my practice would resemble the aesthetics used by many of the vloggers who partook in the demonstrations, whether their vlogs were recorded during the protests or not.

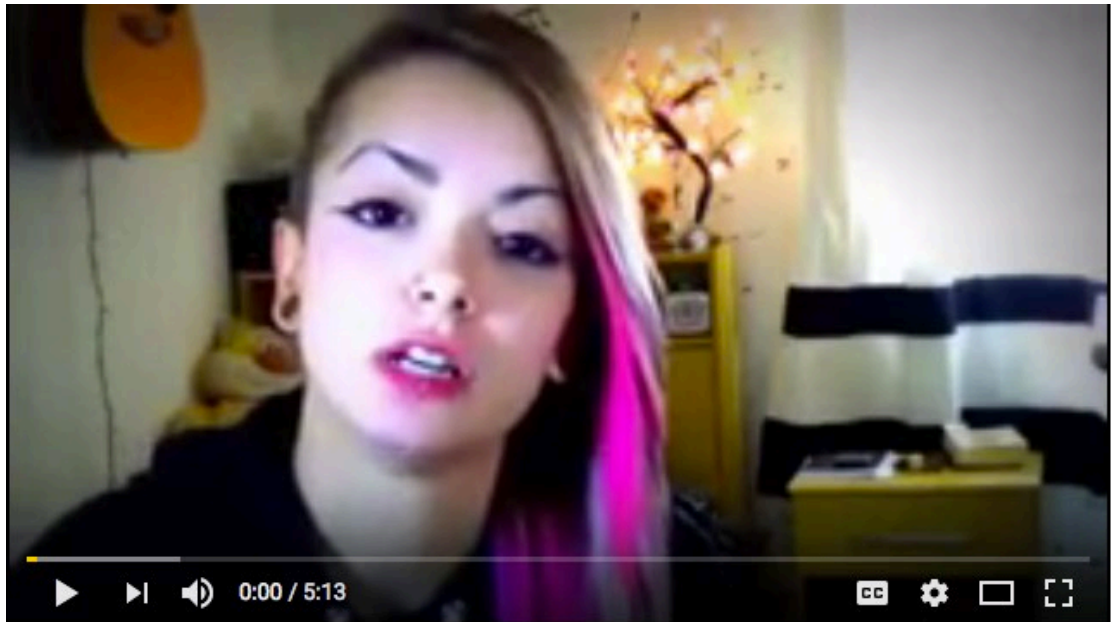


FIGURE 10
Videoblogger 'DiariodePLanducci', 14/06/2013.

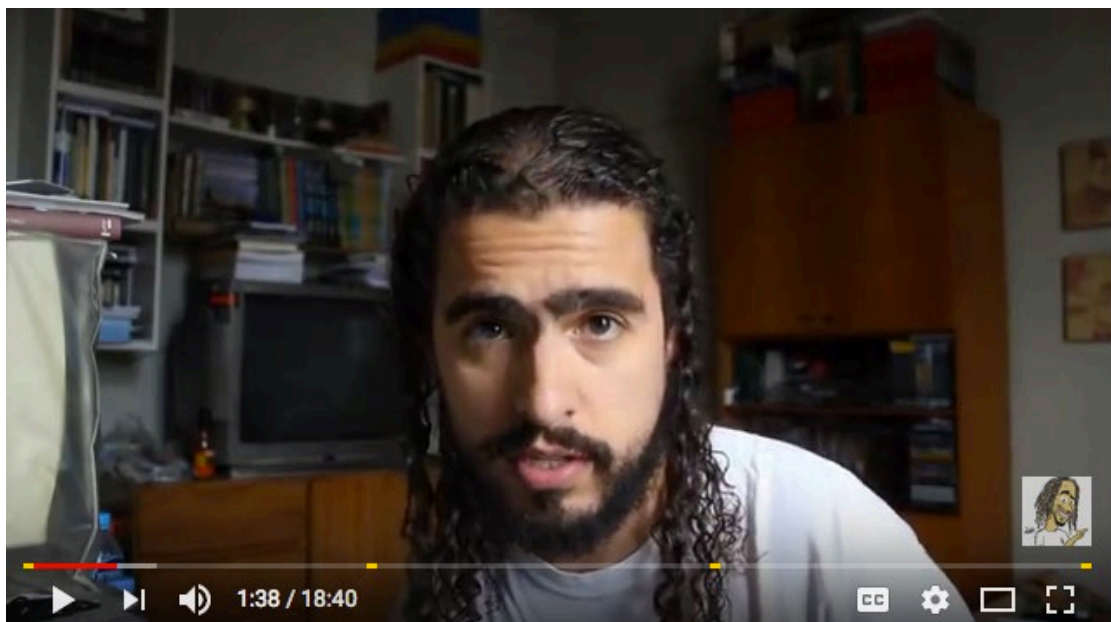


FIGURE 11
Videoblogger 'Canal do Pirula', 18/06/2013.

Throughout the making of this documentary, I had my generation in mind as my main audience. I sought to appropriate the same tropes used by them in their videoblogs and hoped that by doing so, I could make the practice immediately recognizable and relatable to them, allowing for audience engagement and opening an opportunity for

community discussion. Alexandra Juhasz states that:

YouTube forecloses the construction of coherent communities and returns production, consumption and meaning-making to the individual, re-establishing the reign of the self. (2008, p.307)

I would disagree with parts of this statement. Whilst I agree that the nuances of the idea of self and its innumerable forms of representation are very much at the core of the content produced for YouTube, it does not necessarily exclude the platform from becoming a space for the creation of meaningful communities.

During the 2013 mobilisations it was possible to see content producers of various backgrounds interacting within the platform, as well as sharing opinions and thoughts on the demonstrations, thus engaging in the way these protests were structured. These interactions navigated between the offline and online world. I met Lucas Soares, one of the people who helped me with filming the demonstrations in the streets, due to a video he posted on his YouTube account where he expanded on his own experiences as a first-time protester. It is clear that YouTube has evolved rapidly over the years and I believe that the sense of community it once lacked is now one of its greatest strengths.

The way I decided to self-inscribe in relation to my film was to follow the young protesters' protocol and talk straight to camera. I drew inspiration on the many ways Casey Neistat frames himself when a talking head element is present in his work, where most of the shots would be wide angle or mid-shot. I would talk straight to camera and face centre frame, breaking the rule of thirds often present in documentary films. My aim was to make the audience feel I was speaking directly to them, telling my own version of the story of the events of 2013. I also experimented with a high angle at the beginning of the film as way to evoke a sense of inexperience whilst discussing the mobilizations

All of my self-inscribed shots were filmed in my home. I noticed that a common thread amongst videobloggers was to mediate their domestic space (whether their bedrooms, living rooms or offices) and illustrate them into their practices.

For the majority of the cutaways in the film, I made reference to the Casey Neistat-style of storytelling. I wanted people watching the piece to recognize the elements I had added to the practice immediately, derived from a series of strategies deployed by first person YouTube filmmakers. Casey often uses a high-angle camera technique that allows him to make use of a variety of creative ways to physically demonstrate the themes approached within videoblogs, whether drawing, cutting images, writing, painting etc.

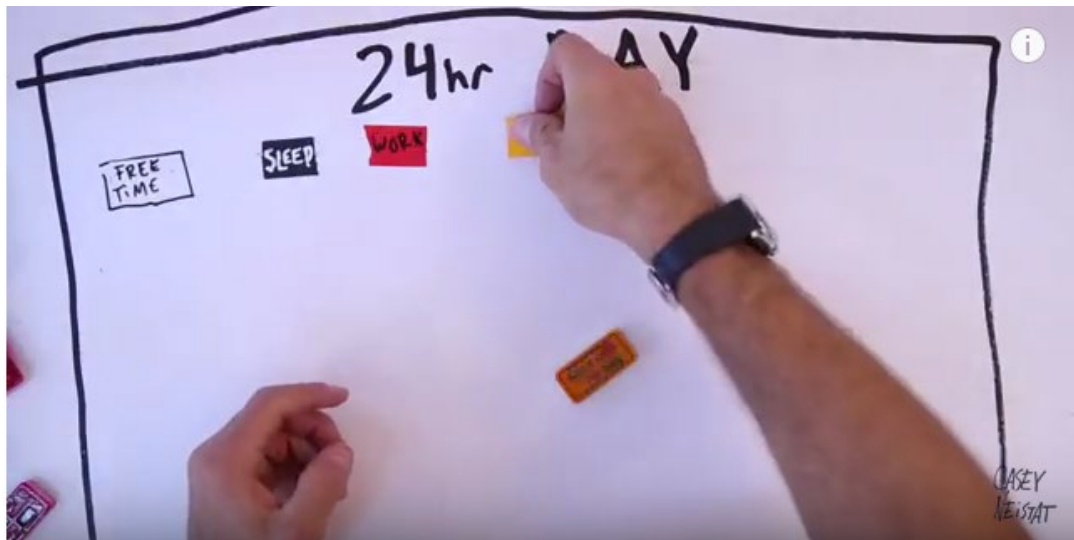


FIGURE 14
Casey Neistat Vlog, 7/05/2015.

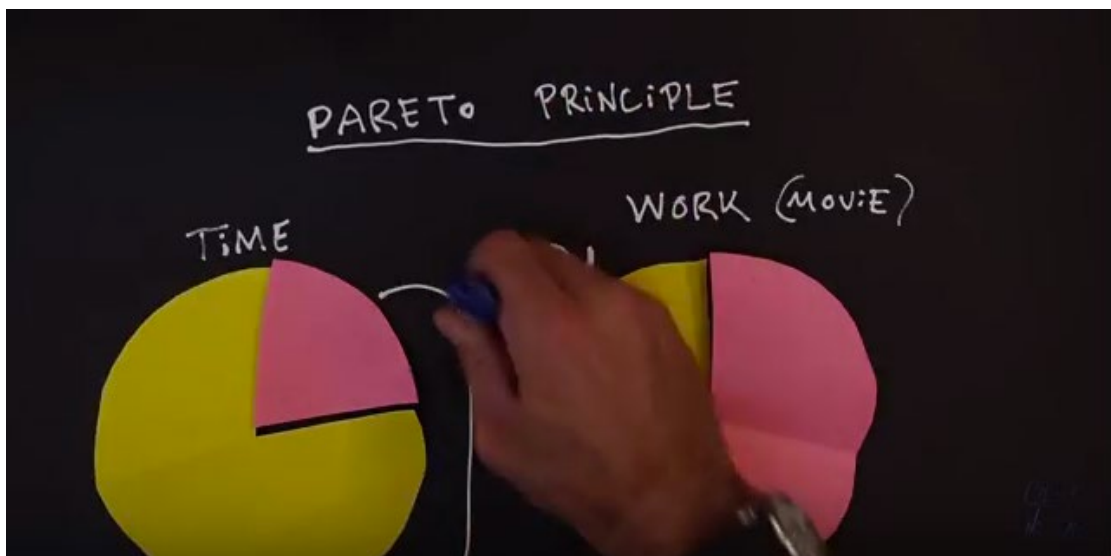


FIGURE 1
Casey Neistat Vlog, 05/01/2016.

This was a strategy I found to reconstruct the story of the 2013 movement and provide a detailed backdrop of the events to the audience.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to contextualize and situate my film within the vast ambit of documentary film. It did so by exploring the cinematic techniques deployed in the construction of its visual narrative.

I brought forward the concepts of Third Cinema, Cinema Novo and grassroots video in Latin America as a way to locate my own film. In doing so, I was able to provide the framework for the format in which I chose to address the film's highly personal and political content. Third Cinema's (Cinema Novo in Brazil) essence lies in the creation of a cinema that is independent in its production, political in its content and free to experiment with audiovisual techniques and cinematic tropes. Getino and Solanas (1969) described this as 'revolutionary cinema', a militant cinema that seeks to render accounts of national realities, focusing on the denunciation of public grievances and political issues. Although different in its aesthetics, grassroots video in Brazil had a similar aim at its core. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, affordable videography apparatus was introduced to the audiovisual market, allowing for the wider accessibility of camera recorders. Activists and political groups made use of the video recording tool as a way to articulate ideas, communicate and network. The production of these videos did not require the same cinematic expertise, equipment and skills as were present in Cinema Novo films. Grassroots videos were able to have a wider circulation and distribution, becoming a popular alternative amongst independent communities and individuals that sought to depict the socio-political world around them. Patricia Aufderheide (2000) claimed that grassroots video was able to draw inspiration and develop the political experience of documentary film and cinema. Both practices become an alternative to mainstream media, being instrumental in the fight against the elite's control of information.

I conclude that my film can be placed within the intersection of these two concepts. My documentary contains technical nuances present in both. In line with the ethos behind Cinema Novo, the content of the film seeks to illuminate the complexities of national identity whilst at the same time addressing an overall political theme. The film's aesthetics drew inspiration from Cinema Novo's ability to explore different techniques of representation. I experimented with the film's narrative through the use of audiovisual techniques utilized in the making of videoblogs. I also found inspiration in grassroots video's rawness and direct approach to visual storytelling, particularly focusing my footage and sequences of the street protests in a similar factual style.

The commonality between grassroots video and Cinema Novo lies in their ability to communicate socio-political messages globally, blurring geographical boundaries. It is possible, then, to say that this gives the medium of documentary film and video a transnational character of their own. Getino and Solanas stated that:

Testimony about a National reality is also an inestimable means of dialogue and knowledge on a global scale. No internationalist form of struggle can be carried out successfully if there is not a mutual exchange of experiences among the people, if the people do not succeed in breaking out of the Balkanisation on the international, continental, and national planes which imperialism is striving to maintain. (1969, p.10)

I sought to depict the transnational element through film, as a medium able to blur global borders. I illustrated my own quality as a transnational filmmaker by narrating the film in my non-native language of English.

The introduction and development of new media technologies and online video-hosting platforms has enabled film and video to reach audiences on a much wider, global scale. YouTube and video based platforms offer a potentially democratic space in which contemporary filmmakers can create and share content in the shape of daily vlogs. There is a fairly new trend in videoblogging that makes use of first person and autobiographical strategies in order to self-inscript and "place emphasis on the performative, relational self" (Hughes, 2008, p.246). This new approach to videoblogging finds its foundations in cinematic tropes and documentary-style

narratives. The filmic language used by contemporary videobloggers has come to influence the making of my own documentary. Through the techniques used in my film, I wished to create a piece that was heavily inspired by YouTube, vlogs and personal accounts of the 2013 demonstrations. I did so as a way to visually communicate the key role that social media platforms and video based content producers had in the dissemination and organization of the demonstrations.

The making of this highly experimental documentary allowed me to conclude that the videoblogging aesthetics has drawn inspiration from documentary and cinematic film tropes. Due to the current form in which audiovisual content is now produced, distributed and consumed, vlogs have built up and expanded film techniques. They have been able to reconfigure modes of self-representation, breaking visual storytelling boundaries and reaching a wider audience. I see vlogs as shorter, compact versions of documentary films, perhaps becoming a strand of the genre in some capacity. My film sought to illustrate the importance of vlogging as a valid visual medium for communication. Vlogs have become important tools in spreading militant content and political views. Through the use of first person narrative techniques, vloggers are able to reveal issues from an insider's perspective, consequently creating engagement and forming communities. Through experimenting with this wealth of video and filmic tropes, I was able to create a film that was indeed independent in its production and militant in its essence:

Pamphlet films, didactic films, report films, essay films, witness-bearing films, any militant form of expression is valid, and it would be absurd to lay down a set of aesthetic work norms. Be receptive to all that the people have to offer, and offer them the best.
(Getino and Solanas, 1969, p.10)

Chapter 4

Conclusion

At the heart of this project was an underlying desire to reconnect with my home country of Brazil. I wanted to investigate how a practice-led PhD project could be created to explore the filmmaker's cultural identity, cultural hybridity, transnationalism and concept of home. Filmed in the context of a first-person narrative and foregrounding all the nuances and complexities of identity politics, the body of my research was highly personal. Driven by a quest for belonging, I sought to understand how to exist in and inhabit transnational spaces (Naficy, 2003). As the research progressed, I found myself having to self-negotiate the often confusing, unsettling characteristics of the transnational experience. Realisations of belonging neither here nor there brought to the surface questions about how transnationalism had come to affect my understanding of the flux of multi-layered facets which formed my idea of self (Hall, 1990). Analysing these realisations prompted an emotional evaluation of their cause and effect on my own nature, a process which subsequently guided the construction of the film's narrative. Through a more in-depth understanding and exploration of my personal multicultural experiences and how these contributed to my idea of self, I was able to create a documentary that exposed a broader, socio-political issue through the personal lens of an individual's experience.

Batty and Kerrigan (2018) stated that there needs to be an analysis of the way practitioners' emotional journeys are understood in order to effectively contribute and connect to the outcome of research production. In my journey to becoming a researcher, I found that the element of the personal and exploration of the self was not only necessary, but also a fundamental factor that contributed towards the making and development of a first-person documentary. The processes of production within the film demanded continual self-reflection. Producing a first-person driven story, as a transnational filmmaker, requires a willingness to provide access to complex emotional and psychological cartographies that interconnect and to relate these to social and cultural contexts.

The creation of a *Cinema of We* (Lebow, 2012) is a concept comprised of two primary elements: the 'I' and the 'we'. The first person narrative is constructed as the 'I' of the story and consists of an entity that narrates and oversees the storyline. The 'we' of the story coexists in unison with the 'I', and is represented by the story's participants. The 'I' is, therefore, plural, often informed and in relation to 'we'. As the first-person narrator, I acknowledged myself as the 'I' of the story within the documentary narrative. I subsequently identified my family, friends and the individuals who took part in the protests as the 'we' elements present in the film. The first person mode allowed me to explore and represent the self in my film as a relational one, finding itself often in dialogue with its surroundings, people, culture and anything that influenced its construction. In understanding the 'I' as plural, the first person mode acted as a vehicle for considering issues involving family, culture and identity. All of which contribute to informing and allowing the first person storyteller to construct their narrative. The processes involved in the creation of this self-conscious narrative, from placing myself on camera to interviewing family members, were emotionally challenging and demanding. The first person camera acted like a key that opened new doors. From a filmmaker's perspective, the video apparatus gave me the chance to ask questions and initiate conversations I would not have otherwise done so without its presence.

It was apparent to me that the camera had a clear effect on my grandmother and great-aunties. They seemed to enjoy the camera's glaze, often performing and speaking directly to it with a desire to share personal opinions and elements of their day-to-day lives I never had access to before. While this provided me with a wealth of footage of rich, previously un-accessed content, it did make me question why I had never seen this deeply intimate side of them before. It made me wonder what was it about the presence of a camera that made them want to invite me in, and share their intimacies and personal thoughts? In this instance, the first-person camera appeared to have been able to unlock clear tensions which then highlighted a disconnection in our relationships.

In my experience, interviewing family members was challenging as I felt a deeper duty of care towards them. Through their responses to my interview questions, I became increasingly more aware of the generational and cultural gap between us. This awareness not only alienated me from them, but also from the process of the interview itself. I felt conflicted with the realisation that I could not relate to them or their personal points of view. This filled me with feelings of doubt that surrounded the entire process. It created insecurities that stopped me from ultimately questioning their answers in fear of insulting them or creating a potentially awkward situation between us.

The first person method allowed me to untangle family ties, and imprint in film my personal process of understanding the tensions between us. With family involved, this process felt like a deeper awakening that called upon emotion and intuition. It gave me the chance to revisit childhood memories, understand the cultural beliefs I was brought up with and reconnect to a past self that, up until that point, felt like a distant memory.

Throughout this deeply personal journey of constructing the documentary's narrative, I relied significantly on the element of intuition to guide me through the difficult decisions and situations that arose, particularly when interviewing my family and when shooting the 2013 demonstrations. My intuition allowed me to remain curious and open to new storytelling possibilities. During interviews with family members, it played a key role in enabling me to sense how to formulate a question better or when to stop probing. At the time of the protests, it guided me in making choices around when to exit potentially dangerous locations or distance myself away from advancing situations.

Pinpointing these contextual elements within the creation of a first-person narrative plays an important role in the field of its research. By understanding the elements that help mould the 'I' and 'we' constructs of a story, we can use the knowledge gained by this as a tool to obtain a more deeply insightful and expansive outlook which contributes additional value to the overall research.

Starting the research required me, first and foremost, to peel away the layers of my own understanding of selfhood. It was a process of getting to know myself in order to comprehend my position within the film. I had to become more familiar with parts of myself that I had not yet accessed or perhaps had found difficult to access in the past, in order to rationalise my conflicting sentiments towards my home country and the country I now call home. This method of research in itself is charged with emotional and sensitive responses, hence straying away from it would have left fundamental gaps in the research parameters. By embracing it, it contributed to the overall outcome of the narrative and, in this instance, brought the story to life.

Observing the context in which this practice was being made was part of the process that constructed the self aspect that was eventually inserted within the film. Deconstructed, this observation process was made up of elements such as: who am I communicating with and therefore relating to? Which part of myself is required to be put forward as the first-person voice? Piecing the narrative together required me to evaluate my inner thoughts and to engage with an ongoing process of looking inwards in order to identify the relevant fragmented part of my self. By identifying this fragmented shard of my self, I was able to go on to perform (Bruzzi, 2000) the role of the narrator. I was embodying the persona of someone who was embarking on a quest for political education, while undertaking a journey of returning home. This formed the foundations of a narrative that then went on to explore the broader topic of large-scale social movements.

Farber (2010) states that concepts of selfhood and otherness concerning matters of identity politics and their representations have been explored to the 'point of exhaustion' within academia: "there is a need to explore whether there may be new and other ways of conceptualising selfhood and otherness, what forms these might take, and what questions are being raised" (Farber, 2010; Rutten et al., 2013a, p.461). Based on my findings from within this research paradigm, this practice-led work seeks to contribute to Farber's statement. Intrinsic processes of representation are at the core of first-person narratives in the form of the conceptualisation of the self and

others. To make a documentary focused on autobiographical aspects is to acknowledge and embrace the possibility of seeing one's self, or at least the part of it that is present in the storytelling, as the other. Andres Di Tella contributes to this statement by stipulating that "the one who tells the life is telling the story of the one who lived it." (Di Tella, 2012, p.35)

This autoethnographic study placed me in a position in which I was both the self and the other, acting as both insider and outsider due to my ability to navigate through both Brazilian and British culture. The hybridity aspect placed me within a transnational spectrum. This influence was present within my identity and culture, playing an essential role in the progression of the practice research and this written thesis. Within the frameworks of this research, the transnational element became my other and fundamentally formed part of my self. Reminiscing on the relationships with family members and friends shone a light into my upbringing in Brazil and gave me fresh insight into the person 'who I once was'. However, the realisation of this notion led me to predicaments of alienation and unease. Coming to terms with these unsettling experiences is what led me to further explore the different ways in which my cultural hybridity had now placed me in what Homi Bhaba (1994) described as the "third space". By evaluating my own experience of the 'third space', I made a conscious decision to narrate the film in English, rather than my native Portuguese, as a way to highlight and illustrate my transnational element.

In constructing the 'I' within my story, I relied upon a mixture of conventional storytelling techniques and contemporary filmic strategies. Narrating the film from beginning to end in my non-native language of English expressed duality. It was a way to place emphasis on the fact that this was a personal outlook on a greater socio-political subject and would, therefore, be heavily defined by the element of my own bias. The 'me' leading the film is depicted as someone whose cultural capital and life experience had led them down a path of departing from their native homeland. It is a voyage of returning home, in which a fragmented version of my self is represented and performed within the narrative. This journey encompassed all of the ups and downs,

challenges and deep-rooted strength required within the decision-making process of relocating from a place of birth.

It is through the eyes of Carolina (myself) that the search for a connection with a place once called home began and came to be integrated into the narrative. Witnessing the graphical and highly emotional actions of the 2013 mobilisations presented me with the idea that these events could be used as an opportunity to bond with a generation whom, much like myself, was in a space of political numbness. By integrating myself further into the experience, I found within the demonstrations, a space for sharing ideas, forming communities and a platform for the release of indignation that had been brewing for a very long time. Becoming the maker 'of' and subject 'in' (Renov, 2004), I was able to document the protests through a unique perspective that only audiovisual media could essentially provide. In doing so, the medium of first-person documentary effectively then became the object of the research, inserting my individual experiences in the protests and within the social context of Brazil's cycles of large-scale collective demonstrations.

Social media formed a huge part of the decision making within the production of the film. The 2013 movements relied heavily on the use of social media networks and video-hosting platforms such as YouTube to share content and spread awareness of the demonstrations. This trend fascinated me and influenced me to explore alternative methods of storytelling in this specific format, recreating and illustrating various points within the film. The relevance of this media format now plays a huge part in our everyday society. These online platforms give people the opportunity to find a voice to communicate their ideologies and beliefs to a wider audience. They transcend political boundaries of right and left by serving as a means for people to share content regardless of democratic beliefs, providing a means to communicate untainted content which could potentially go against the grain of the mainstream media. Seeing how protestors were utilising social media and video blog networks to congregate and mobilise in the streets of Brazil was a powerful experience. The platforms have become a popular alternative to mainstream media outlets, particularly amongst the younger generation and people associated with the protests. Techniques such as video

blogging were being used to reach people en masse. This resulted in social media becoming a democratic space (Hughes, 2008) in which people attending the protests were now able to freely voice their demands and concerns uncensored.

The format and techniques with which video bloggers were documenting and producing their vlog content inspired my technical process during the production of the film. Using industry standard cinematic tropes and equipment, YouTube filmmakers were creating hybrid content that crossed the bridge between elaborate cinematography techniques and first-person guided daily vlogs, to produce short-form political docu-based video. On witnessing the scale of these vlogs, it felt to me as though documentary film practices were transmuting into a format which leaned towards catering for a more modern generation. In comparison to original documentary formats, which comprised of feature-length roots, this new style of hybrid video vlogging takes shape in the form of condensed methods of storytelling which seem to be far more suited to today's younger audiences. This is genuinely the format seen across most modern social media and video hosting platforms.

Everyday influencers and content creators do not have the accessibility to create feature length productions, and in a society where we are now continuously bombarded with a plethora of visual content, filmic practices have had to adapt. Navigating through an ocean of fast-paced online content, where people do not have all the time needed to assimilate what is presented to them, vlogs have become the new norm in video content communication. Modern developments in mobile video and digital camera technologies have created affordable pathways for content creators to be able to produce visual content that is imbued with industry-standard cinematography. I see vlogging as an exciting format that could be classed as a strand in itself within the first person documentary film realm. It offers any content creator the opportunity to turn real-world stories into audiovisual narratives that reach new audiences and provide unique perspectives on a variety of subject matters. In the instance of mass political movements, it has been a powerful tool in overcoming censorship. It can act as a voice to communicate one's personal beliefs, feelings and grievances. It can also be used as a practical tool to build communities and strengthen

networks through the organisation, mobilisation, and connection of individuals. Vlogging, by its nature, is often 'present' or live and can move with the subject matter as it unfolds. It gives the audience space to directly engage and interact with the content in ways not offered by documentary film or TV media outlets. As I witnessed during the protests, this versatility created an arena for public democratic discourse that also impacted the participation and network reach of the social movements by disseminating the message to a wider audience.

From a technical aspect, I believe the vlogging format could be utilised to help contribute to current documentary filmmaking practices, particularly in first person and autobiographical narratives. During the process of my research, I began to experiment with techniques seen primarily on contemporary first-person vlogs. Through the creative use of vlogging selfie camera angles, I was able to self-inscribe and become the guiding entity of the film. This technique was in sync with the social media content being produced by the 2013 protestors, and I feel it gave the audience a more immersive viewing experience and a more relatable environment for the generation that was noticeably involved with the movements. The making of this practice has shown me that video blogging can be a valuable tool in disseminating a social activist agenda and in giving visibility to marginalised communities. The use of first-person documentary techniques in this format allows for an improvement in the way political messages are communicated.

I feel the creative visual narrative strategies used by video blogging filmmakers allows for a multitude of visual experimentation. I believe they can exist in a symbiotic relationship of first-person storytelling and contemporary daily vlogs. Applying these techniques throughout the production and editing process of my film ultimately influenced and shaped the final cut. It proved to be an effective way of communicating and pinpointing specific eruption points during the mass movements.

Cycles of mass movements in Brazil

One of the aims of the research was to explore the use of first-person documentary to gain an understanding of the large-scale social movements in Brazil and evaluate how

they have come to influence different generations within the country. I chose to refer to the movements as 'cycles', to follow Sidney Tarrow's (1995) definition:

A protest cycle consists of a sequence of public demonstrations, with greater than usual frequency and intensity, that spreads across social sectors and involves new forms of protesting and organising. At the peak of mobilisation, social routines are suspended and social creativity flourishes. (Alonso and Mische, 2017, p.15)

Within this context, three of the largest social movements witnessed in Brazil were the 1984 Diretas Ja, the 1992 Caras Pintadas and the 2013 June demonstrations. These movements had a significant impact on Brazilian history due to their sheer magnitude and widespread engagement. In documenting these events, much emphasis was placed on how they came to emerge and how those involved organised themselves around social demands that addressed problematic political phases in Brazilian history.

Hochstetler (1997) claimed that the history of social movements in Brazil is directly linked to Brazilians' disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the state of democracy in their country. She stated that mass movements could be categorised into different master frames, placing the 1984 Diretas Ja into the frame of a fight for democratisation and the removal of the military regime. Hochstetler argued that the 1984 movement did not end but instead continued to develop throughout the 1990s.

I would suggest that if the 1984 movement revolved around the process of re-democratisation, then the 1992 and 2013 movements were centred on a collective demand for an improvement in the quality of democracy. During the production of the documentary, through my interactions with the participants of the 2013 protests, I gained considerable insight into the demands that triggered the uprising. In exploring Brazil's period of socio-political crisis, the first person mode became a space in which I was able to explore my own emotions and confusion towards the 2013 demonstrations. As I went on to self-inscribe in the film and rationalised my feelings towards the events, conflicting issues with my understanding of concepts of democracy, citizenship and national identity were brought to light. The first person

method provided me with the opportunity to be vocal about my struggles in comprehending these notions, while at the same time, entering a dialogue with protesters, friends and family as a way to make sense of them.

Exploring my own experiences and feelings within these movements fed into my understanding that in Brazil, although notions of democracy, citizenship and national identity are present in theory; in practical, everyday life, they tend to be problematic and somewhat lacking. Throughout the 2013 protests, there was a palpable frustration with the development of the country's fundamental socio-economic pillars. Although there was a lack of trust in the government, people were calling for better, more transparent governmental practices rather than a democratic overhaul.

I place the 1992 and 2013 movements into the frame of a fight for *cidadania* (citizenship) and a need for improvement in fundamental democratic pillars. It is also apparent that the notion of citizenship, a concept already fluid by nature, has over time acquired different meanings as Brazilians settled into a progressing democratic society. What Brazilians were accustomed to in terms of their citizenship and rights in 1992 saw a significant change in the years up to 2013. As portrayed within my film, these elements were impacted by differences in political attitudes among generations and implementation of factors such as new policies of citizenship participation. The production of this film affected my understanding of the concept of citizenship. Growing up in a democratic society that fell within the twenty year gap between mass movements, prior to the 2013 demonstrations, I had never truly questioned the notion of citizenship before. The first time I had to reflect upon the concept of citizenship was when I moved to England and was categorised as an immigrant. My status as an international student meant that I would not have similar rights to British citizens, and as a result, I would have certain living and working restrictions imposed upon me. This lack of access to important rights made me evaluate and change my perception of my own Brazilian citizenship. Due to my country's constitution, I was granted fundamental rights that allowed me to participate actively in Brazil's democracy. The 2013 protests and the making of this film made me conscious of this opportunity to participate, enabling me to understand that *cidadania* is not a passive term, but rather an act of

doing. The movements were against political ideas and corruption that were threatening the foundations of the country's democratic pillars. Fighting against that, as well as voicing our own political grievances, was a way of exercising our rights as citizens.

Taking into account the gap of two decades between the mass movements of 1990 and 2013, I further explored the concept of political alienation brought to the forefront during the interviews conducted with my friends. During these interviews, they referred to the Brazilian generation born and raised in the 1990s as one that seemed to lack political initiative and participation. Seeking to investigate why they held this opinion, I concluded that three main factors had emerged between the 1990 and 2013 movements that affected people's overall attitudes towards politics in Brazil. These factors justified the alienation references that my friends were speaking of in the film:

- 1) *Brazil's historical background*: Brazil still struggles to step away from its colonial past and the ingrained systems that favour the elites and the bourgeoisie. As witnessed in the huge disparity between classes, mass unemployment, political corruption and countrywide poverty, it is possible to see the remnants and effects of this system.

- 2) *Behavioural aspects*: During the film's interviews, Amanda stated that we "inherit myths and behaviours from our parents and previous generations". Mariana elaborated on this statement by saying that she felt our grandparent's and parent's generation were severely "alienated". Claiming that they applied a level of "selective blindness" towards their day-to-day lives, meaning they would not become involved in any form of socio-political issue that they did not deem necessary or indirectly effective towards their everyday existence. Through interviewing my family members, I was able to gain further understanding of the psychological and social impacts of growing up during a dictatorship regime. I found they had been conditioned to patterns of civic and political behaviours that belittled participation and freedom of expression and instead favoured unequivocal respect and obedience to military authority.

These behavioural aspects which were embedded into the older generations were inadvertently transmitted and passed on to the younger ones, as experienced by myself and my friends throughout our upbringings.

- 3) *The quality of educational institutions:* In Brazil, one of the most important pillars of society; education, is one of the least regarded ones. Public institutions have very limited resources and receive little to no funding or investment. The subsequent lack of support and quality of the country's educational curriculum impacts the depth of informative learning available to the younger generations. The curricula tend to favour themes of European and western learning, meaning subjects that emphasise more politically-based topics such as national historical events and socio-political developments are often not prioritised. The consequence of this educational system, through the lack of teaching, learning, and understanding of basic political foundations within the country, contributes to a feeling of alienation amongst young people.

Final summary

In line with Tarrow (1995), I conclude that all three of the popular movements witnessed in the country did not come to an end per se, but rather became phases of cycles which continually built up and evolved into different versions of themselves. The movements of June 2013 created an unprecedented and unexpected event. One of its most remarkable traits was seen within the demonstrations' numerous trigger points, which signified a clear difference between this protest and the previous mass movement cycles of 1984 and 1992. Unlike the previous cycles, the 2013 demonstrations did not have a singular direct outcome in mind. Their structural organisation was far more innovative, seeing the use of social media and online video platforms as some of the main tools for dissemination. As with the previous cycles, the 2013 movement saw its rapid demobilisation in the same year, referred to as the end of its first phase (Hochstetler, 1997). There has since been other large-scale demonstrations which drew inspiration from the 2013 movement by once again using social media and online platforms as a means of mobilisation and organisation.

As we look towards the future and become an ever more technological society, it is important that we acknowledge the implications of the rise in user-generated visual content and internet-based media in shaping representations of societal issues and mobilising political action. As seen over the last decade, social media landscapes and video hosting platforms are continuously growing and becoming more prevalent within our society. Video has fast become one of the most popular forms of media for delivering and sharing information. With the ongoing development of technological infrastructure and new technologies such as Blockchain, more people will continue to have the ability and opportunity to be online. Therefore, in line with the expected growth and use of visual media, I would suggest that independent documentary created in the vlogging format can be a powerful tool for practice-led research. This potentially forms an important part of this future landscape and should, therefore, be considered even more relevant.

From a personal perspective, the act of carrying out practice-led research has given me the opportunity to experiment and celebrate new media technologies and their visual tropes. The nature of the vlogging practice as an 'I' (filmmaker) talking directly to a 'you' (audience), became my strategy of choice within the making of my film. This technique enabled me to express a key format of audiovisual communication. This project also gave me a unique opportunity to extend my knowledge in the field of first-person and autobiographical theories. I consider the practice to be successful in its aim of contributing to the field of creative research and first-person documentary theory.

The process of depicting both the 'I' and the 'we' of my story revealed the challenges I faced in understanding my own identity and concept of home. It also highlighted my struggle in interviewing my family members as participants of the film. In autobiographic documentary theory, the 'I' might be plural, in turn becoming the 'we'. However, I discovered that my 'I' was very conflicted.

My 'I' stepped away from the conventional parameters of the Brazilian society in which I grew up by choosing to adapt and adjust to life in a different culture. The

opportunity to transit between these two countries throughout the research reinforced my sense of alienation towards both cultures, enhancing the realisation that my 'I' existed in a hybrid, 'third space'. I would describe this 'third space' as a particularly lonely place to inhabit. It is travelling to a native home and being unable to fundamentally relate to and understand cultural norms and societal paradigms that were once all too familiar. It is choosing another country as a home, only to realise it will never truly be where you belong. I have always been reminded of my 'outsider' status while residing in the UK. A range of factors contributed to this, from visa immigration and Home Office reminders to difficulties in understanding simple cultural aspects such as people's sense of humour and accents. What I did not foresee was that returning to Brazil following the 2013 protests would give me the same feeling of being an 'outsider' that I had experienced in England. This left me with a feeling of displacement, as I now felt like an outsider both in my native country and my chosen host country.

This sense of displacement became even more apparent when interviewing my family members. I recognised the sensitive nature of the political discussion, however, in the early stages of my interviews, I was not mentally prepared to understand my grandmother's and great-aunties' political stances. The highly conservative nature of their responses highlighted our generational differences, conveying to me how I did not truly know them outside of their family roles as grandmother and great-aunties. I had grown up with the perception of them as authoritative figures, the result of which formed a process that involved me distancing myself from them. The production of this documentary gave me the opportunity to explore and understand the matriarchs of my family as women who were a product of their own generation. It enabled me to ask questions and enquire deeply into personal and political issues, that without my camera, I would not have been able to do.

Comprehending the nature of my family's political views did not prevent my overall sense of estrangement from them or my native country. I was imbued with conflicting emotions that ranged from guilt (in not being able to relate to my own family and culture), confusion and feelings of isolation. Pinpointing these contextual difficulties in

putting together a first-person narrative is key in moulding the 'I' and the 'we' of a story. I believe this is where autobiographical documentary theory finds its limitation. It does not completely appreciate the emotional challenges and deep personal exposure of the self in their claims of the 'I's being plural or the 'I' being the 'we'.

Finally, I conclude that the making of a first-person film, driven by the intricacies of the concepts of transnationality and cultural hybridity, as well as influenced by video blogging techniques and autobiographical tropes, allowed for a self-exploration of identity, and a depiction of an individual experience that is inserted within a much wider, socio-political context.

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